

Communities Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund for Adults

Guidance Notes 2026-2027

The funding will be allocated through [Dundee's Third Sector Interface](#)

Please read the following document before completing your application

Funded through:



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1. Background

The Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund for Adults (the Fund) was established in October 2021 and to date has distributed around £99 million to community initiatives supporting mental health and wellbeing across Scotland. Funding for Year 6 (£15 million) was announced in March 2025.

The Fund has a strong focus on prevention and early intervention and aims to support grass roots community groups in tackling mental health inequalities and addressing priority issues of:

- social isolation and loneliness;
- suicide prevention; and
- tackling poverty and inequality.

There will be a continued emphasis in Year 6 on responding to the ongoing cost of living crisis and on those facing socio-economic disadvantage, with a particular focus on supporting the six priority family groups identified under [Best Start Bright Futures: Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan](#) and the new plan [Bringing Hope Building Futures Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2026-2031](#)

The Fund will continue to be delivered through a locally focused and co-ordinated approach via local partnership groups (building upon existing partnerships and with TSIs as lead partner), working together to ensure that support to community-based organisations is directed appropriately and in a coherent way. This collaborative approach is more important than ever, giving increasing budget and capacity constraints within individual sectors. Refer to the Appendix to learn more about [Dundee's Partnership approach](#).

Further background information on the Fund can be found [here](#).

2. Communities Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund: For Adults

Aim

Support community-based initiatives that promote and develop good mental health and wellbeing and/or mitigate and protect against the impact of distress and mental ill health within the adult population (aged 16 or over), with a particular focus on prevention and early intervention.

Specifically, it aims to:

1. Tackle mental health inequalities through supporting a range of 'at risk' groups [more details in the [Appendix](#)].
2. Address priority issues of social isolation and loneliness, suicide prevention and poverty and inequality with a particular emphasis on responding to the cost of living crisis and support to those facing socio-economic disadvantage.
3. Support small 'grass roots' community groups and organisations to deliver such activities. [refer to the [Eligibility section](#) for more details]
4. Provide opportunities for people to connect with each other, build trusted relationships and revitalise communities.

Outcomes

The intended outcomes of the Fund remain the same as previous years and are to:

- Develop a culture of mental wellbeing and prevention within local communities and across Scotland with improved awareness of how we can all stay well and help ourselves and others.
- Foster a strategic and preventative approach to improving community mental health.
- Support the resilience of communities and investing in their capacity to develop their own solutions, including through strong local partnerships.
- Tackle the social determinants of mental health by targeting resources and collaborating with other initiatives to tackle poverty and inequality.

Projects **must have a specific community focus** rather than providing regional or national coverage. It may be useful to refer to priorities in the [Dundee Suicide Prevention Delivery Plan](#) and [Council Plan 2022-2027 | Dundee City Council](#).

Funding available

There are two types of funding available:

- Level 1 – grants of up to £10,000
- Level 2 – grants between £10,001 to £30k

You do not need to apply for the full amount for either level.

We are reopening for 1-year project funding (2026/27)

We highly encourage applications from grassroots organisations and/or groups completely **new to the fund** and **joint applications**

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(new or existing) from those collaboratively working together to address the aims of the fund, particularly around equalities and inclusion, within their communities.

The Fund must not be seen as a way to replace other funding streams, particularly from statutory bodies. Projects that meet the Fund's objectives and can demonstrate clear added value relative to statutory provision can be considered.

Please refer to the [Appendix](#) for case study examples and supplementary guidance around Equalities & Inclusion.

3. Funding Application Process and Assessment

Stage 1: Expression of interest

- Period from Monday 7th September to Friday 18th September 5pm

Stage 2: Pre-application sifting process

Stage 3: Invitation to complete application

- Deadline to submit Monday 12th October 5pm

Stage 4: Panel review & assessment

- The Decision-Making Panel is representative group and come to a collective decision on all applications and cannot comment individually.

Stage 5: Application outcome (award or rejection)

- Sending of award letters and grants **distributed into accounts** will be no later than **31st March 2027**. However, we aim to inform all applicants of the outcome of their application in **December 2026** after the Decision-Making Panel meet.
- All funding must be spent **12 months** after being awarded.

4. Eligibility

Please ensure you meet the following criteria, if you do not, please do not submit an application. The Fund can support both existing and new projects. Projects funded are eligible to apply again but must demonstrate impact and learning from previous years and explain how they are developing and expanding the existing project. **Note:** if you have been awarded consecutively for an existing or new project you may be ineligible to apply again. Please get in touch to discuss further.

If you are an un-constituted community group, you may still be eligible to apply for a smaller grant of £2,000 in partnership with another organisation/host that has the correct governance in place. Please contact funding@dvva.scot first to discuss. **Do not submit an application.**

	Check
Meet at least one of the outcomes • social isolation and loneliness • suicide prevention • tackling poverty and inequality	☐
The people who will benefit from your activity are adults (16+) who live in Dundee	☐
You are not duplicating services in your area	☐
You have an income of less than £1 Million	☐
Have an independent bank account or use of a third sector host bank account	☐
Have a constitution or set of rules	☐
Have an up-to-date year of accounts* If you are in your first year of trade and do not have accounts, we will require an organisational budget projection for the year.	☐
Be a community group/charity/social enterprise/ other third sector organisation	☐
Completed pre-application Expression of Interest online form	☐

5. How to submit an application

Complete an [Expression of Interest Form](#) prior to Friday 18th September 5pm.

Should you wish for **support or to discuss the fund prior to submitting your application** you can get in touch through funding@dvva.scot or phone in on 01382 305700.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation requirements

Forms will be distributed following confirmation of funding. A completed form is expected to be returned after 12 months from the date of the grant letter.

What will the Fund support?

- Equipment
- One-off events
- Hall hire for community spaces/venues
Note that this fund will not cover the rent of your own premises
- Small capital spends up to £5,000 (i.e. land or building projects)
Please make sure you own the land or building, have a lease that can't be ended for five years, have a letter from the owner saying the land or building will be leased to you for at least five years, or an official letter from the owner or landlord that says you're allowed to do work on the building) - you should also think about getting planning permission for the work too.
- Management fees, utilities/ongoing running costs capped at 12% of your budget
- Staff costs (one off or fixed term)
- Training costs
- Transport
- Volunteer expenses

This list is not exhaustive but is intended to give an indication of the breadth of activity that can be supported.

What will the Fund not support?

The following types of activities are not eligible for the Fund:

- Contingency costs, loans, endowments or interest
- Electricity generation and feed-in tariff payment
- Political or religious campaigning
- Profit-making/fundraising activities
- Redundancy costs
- VAT you can reclaim
- Statutory activities
- Overseas travel
- Alcohol

To help underrepresented groups to fully benefit from the Fund, applicants are encouraged to include accessibility costs within their proposals. Funds used for inclusion and accessibility must be legitimately and proportionally used to support inclusion of participants and proportionate to the size of the project.

7. Definitions

Aim (your why)

What you hope to achieve, the changes, benefits and effects that happen as a result of your work

e.g. to make older people feel more confident...

Objective (how to)

A programme of activity that you need to carry out to achieve your aim.

e.g. ... by delivering a programme of confidence building courses

Outcomes (what it is)

Things that you do, the difference you plan to make which are usually measurable e.g. number of workshops and people supported.

These should focus on:

- Who is affected
- What changes for them
- How does it change

Performance Indicators

An indicator is a measurable sign of progress towards achieving a particular outcome.

e.g. Number of people who feel their confidence has improved

Number of volunteer hours achieved.

Outputs

The services and products of your work which are usually quantifiable.

e.g. 10 people feel their confidence has improved

120 volunteer hours achieved

12 training courses run

Unrestricted Reserves/Designated Funds

Unrestricted funds are donations or funding a charity can use for any purpose. Sometimes, the charity may **set aside ("ring fence" or designate)** part of these funds for specific needs, like putting aside £10,000 to cover possible staff redundancies, even though they can still change how that money is used later.

Statutory (Public) Bodies

Are formally established organisations that is (at least in part) publicly funded to deliver a public or government service, though not as a ministerial department. They are established to carry out specific functions in the public interest and to regulate and oversee certain industries or sectors. Examples

include NHS, some national museums, the British Library and Office for National Statistics (ONS). For a more in-depth explanation please visit: [Public Bodies explainer](#)

Sustainability

Organisations being able to sustain themselves, projects, operations, services and benefits over a projected lifetime. It is an organisation's ability to weather the changing social, economic and political contexts to continuously benefit its users.

Accounts

Known as the financial documents of an organisation, showing the finance information usually within a financial year (e.g. March 2024 – Apr 2025). The documents that make part of the accounts are a Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss (P&L) Statement

Appendix

Equalities and Inclusion Guidance for Applicants

One of the assessment criteria for the fund is how the project/activity considers and addresses issues of equalities and inclusion. You can maximise your chance of success under these criteria by:

- Being clear about how this project is targeted towards people who would benefit from it the most.
- Telling us about the practical steps you are taking to ensure your project is meaningfully inclusive. This may include reference to the PANEL principles (participation, accountability, non-discrimination, empowerment, legality).

At risk groups within this fund are defined as:

- Women, particularly women experiencing gender-based violence;
- people with a long-term health condition or disability;
- people from a Minority Ethnic background;
- refugees and those with no recourse to public funds;
- people facing socio-economic disadvantage;
- people experiencing severe and multiple disadvantage;
- people with diagnosed mental illness;
- people affected by psychological trauma (including adverse childhood experiences);
- people who have experienced bereavement or loss;
- people disadvantaged by geographical location (particularly remote and rural areas); older people (aged 50 and above);
- people with neurological conditions or learning disabilities, and from neurodivergent communities;
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) communities;
- and young people aged 16-24

Groups which were identified by the **Strategic Oversight Group** as being priority groups in the local area are:

- Young men
- LGBTQ+ young people transitioning from child to adult services
- Communities affected by substance use
- BAME communities
- Those experiencing menopause and perimenopause
- Neurodiverse communities

Key Definitions

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- **Intersectionality/multiple marginalisation:** The recognition that individuals have many personal characteristics that may affect how they experience the world, and that discrimination will be uniquely experienced based on the combination of characteristics a person has. For example, someone who is a wheelchair user living in poverty will experience different barriers to a non-wheelchair user living in poverty.
- **Disadvantaged or marginalised groups:** Individuals or groups of individuals who face additional barriers to accessing their rights, services, their community etc.
- **Equality:** Recognising that people face discrimination & prejudice in relation to some differences and seeking to remove these barriers. Equality means having equal opportunities and not being discriminated against. This is also sometimes referred to as 'equity.'
- **Diversity:** Recognising that people are different in many visible and non-visible ways with action focussed on differences that are connected to prejudice & discrimination. For example, diversity tends to focus on things like a person's gender and race vs a person's favourite colour or star sign.
- **Inclusion:** Recognising that people need to be supported in order to feel safe and welcome within an environment. Giving people the space, voice, and opportunity to feel valued, listened to and considered.

PANEL Principles

The PANEL principles are a practical framework for embedding equalities into a project or activity. PANEL stands for:

- **Participation:** People should be involved in decisions that affect them. This involvement should be meaningful, resulting in their opinions being properly reflected in any outcomes. [This could look like: co-designing elements of the project/activity with those who are most at risk of barriers to taking part.](#)
- **Accountability:** There should be regular monitoring and evaluation of how people's human rights and equalities are being affected, as well as clear solutions when things go wrong. [This could look like: clearly providing safeguarding details to everyone who accesses the project/activity.](#)
- **Non-discrimination:** All forms of discrimination must be recognised, prevented and addressed. People who face the biggest barriers to being involved should be prioritised. [This could look like: reflecting on the specific barriers your community faces and planning for solutions.](#)
- **Empowerment:** Everyone should understand what human rights and equalities mean and be fully supported to take part in processes that affect their human rights and equalities. [This could look like: creating elements of choice within the project/activity.](#)
- **Legality:** Projects/activities should be based on the legal protections that are set out in domestic and international laws. This means being aware of any legislation, like the Equality Act or the

UNCRC bill, that may apply to your project or activity. You are not expected to address this legislation in detail within your application. This could look like: training volunteers on their responsibilities under the Equality Act.

This framework can be used to structure answers to equality questions within your funding application.

- It can help you to identify work you already plan to do that would also support the equalities needs of those accessing your project.
- It can prompt you to consider what barriers those accessing your project might face and generate ideas for how to address these barriers.
- It can act as a simple bullet point structure to insert directly into your application if you are struggling with condensing your answer to fit the word count.

For more information on the PANEL principles, please visit <https://thre.org.uk/topic/panel-principles/>.

This supplementary guidance was produced by THRE (Third Sector Human Rights and Equalities). For more information and support, visit THRE's [website](https://thre.org.uk) or email thre@gcvs.org.uk



CMHWF Dundee Partnership Approach

The Fund will be delivered through the same approach as before - a locally focused and co-ordinated approach, with an emphasis on collaboration across all processes. Local partnership groups should:

- be comprised of TSIs, Integration Authorities (via Health and Social Care Partnership Chief Officer or representative) and a range of other local partners including local authorities
- build upon existing partnerships, networks and alliances - to work together to ensure that support to community based organisations is directed appropriately and in a coherent way.
- prompt wider reflection on continuity of planning, action and wider engagement around how we support community mental health and wellbeing in future and align this with Primary Care

Funds from the Scottish Government will be distributed in all 32 regions of Scotland by local TSIs who will each act as the lead funding partner. They will work collaboratively with the other local partners, particularly with Integration Authorities (via Health and Social Care Partnership Chief Officer or representative) to establish local need and a process to distribute the Fund locally in line with the fund aims, priorities and criteria, in keeping with local strategies and priorities.

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Scottish Government:

The Scottish Government offers national-level support and coordination, advising and promoting the Fund, and guiding the overall structure. It leads on national evaluation, collates local plans, supports the National Oversight Group, and drives national networking and sharing of good practice.

Strategic Oversight Group (SOG) - support in advisory capacity to TSI and DMP on evidenced need within the city, and sounding board for overall local strategic plan

- Act mainly in an advisory capacity, especially focusing on inclusivity and lived experience perspectives.
- They support planning, fund promotion, application processes, capacity building, and monitoring, offering crucial insights to ensure equity and relevance in delivery.
- Coordinate with the TSI in the local plan, contribute to strategic alignment with health and mental health plans. Their role is collaborative and strategic, ensuring the Fund aligns with wider health priorities.

Decision Making Panel (DMP) - assessment and decision on application outcome

- The DMP works closely with the TSI and GOP, to ensure that the distribution of funds aligns with local needs and priorities.
- Ensures that the fund's distribution is in line with broader health and mental health plans, contributing to a coherent and strategic approach to community mental health and wellbeing.
- Emphasise inclusivity and equity in its decision-making processes, ensuring that the support provided is relevant, accessible and representative of all community-based organisations/groups.

Third Sector Interface (TSI) - overall management of the fund

- The TSI plays a leading role and overall administration of the fund.
- Including assessing local priorities, promoting the fund, administering applications, assessing proposals, capacity building, monitoring and evaluation, and facilitating networking and sharing of best practices.
- They are central to driving local delivery and reporting processes.

Example - Voluntary Action South Ayrshire:

Last year we commissioned an organisation to deliver suicide prevention training and SMHFA courses to volunteer leads and staff within the third Sector here in South Ayrshire. This provision is already delivered by the NHS in Ayrshire but due to lack of capacity (perhaps through lack of funding), there are only ever a handful of places

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available via the NHS for the voluntary sector to take up and competition for these places is normally high. There are also barriers around resources in travel, finances and time away. The organisation we commissioned to deliver this directly to the sector, within their own areas, is complimenting the existing NHS provision, reaching more people and breaking the barriers that exist. Delivery of the training is flexible to suit the participants. This funded project has only started in April this year and already had great engagement from the Third Sector. We saw this as additionality to the statutory provision already existing.

Example – Potato Peel Pie Hub Dundee:

The partnership takes forward the work that the individual agencies (Parent to Parent and Relationship Scotland) successfully delivered in Year 1 and 2 in line with their respective aims, and fully meeting the aspirations of the CMHW Framework. The partnership will significantly enhance outcomes and create a model of collaboration that can be mainstreamed through initial learning/development, to become a sustainable delivery model long-term.

The pilot a book club project (“Potato Peel Pie Hub”), aims to:

- increase parents’/carers’ knowledge and skills, and share strategies for the challenges they face (delivering thematic book-club sessions),
- enhance their resilience and wellbeing through 1:1 and group support,
- reduce their social isolation and disconnectedness.

The support includes our (Parent to Parent) collective core services, to enhance parents’ mental wellbeing due to reducing their distress, offering them new skills, improving their resilience, reducing family pressures and isolation, and connecting them with others (and with further help) who can in turn become support networks, long-term. Prioritising at-risk groups is a natural focus for the project; most of our beneficiaries are from these groups.

RSTF deliver programmes as part of the book-club, around family relationships, and conflict, and offer families mediation and counselling support to complement the work of Parent to Parent who offer parents support on other aspects of their needs arising from their child/ren’s additional needs (advocacy, Decider Skills, 1:1 support, group activities, etc.). The book club/hub activities takes place virtually, or in-person at various locations, engaging 70 families (100 parents).

The name for the book-club has come from “The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society”, which is a historical fiction novel written by Mary Ann Shaffer and completed by her niece, Annie Barrows, and a latter film adaption. It is a story about a group of people brought together by adversity and a love of literature. The sentiment in the book was that “books (the stories, information and knowledge shared) have the power to bring people together, and the book-club can provide a refuge creating a community.”

We will also look to set up further partnerships within localities to broaden the reach of the project, including community libraries and community centres, creating the foundations for growing into a Dundee-wide “travelling book club” in a low-cost, sustainable way, drawing from and building on existing resources in the City.