

ESF Community Grants Application Guidance Document



Education & Skills
Funding Agency



Introduction to Community Grants Programme

Hartlepool Borough Council has been awarded the contract to manage the Tees Valley Community Grants Programme, in partnership with the other four Local Authorities within the sub-region. The programme is jointly funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). There is a total of £2.7m of grant funding available over the lifetime of the programme.

There are grants of between £10,000 and £20,000 available for individual projects. The intent of the Community Grants Programme is to enable appropriate third sector and other small organisations (that would not otherwise be able to) access ESF funding for the purpose of mobilising disadvantaged or excluded unemployed and economically inactive people to facilitate their progress towards employment. The eligibility criteria to apply for a Community Grant is shown below:

- **Small Organisation:** Organisations that employ fewer than 49 full time equivalent staff and have an annual turnover equal to or under EUR 10 million or balance sheet equal to or below EUR 10 million.
- **Third Sector Organisation:** an organisation which operates within the Third Sector (which is the part of an economy or society comprising non-governmental and non-profit making organisations or associations including charities, voluntary and community groups).

Grants will support a range of activities aimed at assisting the disadvantaged or excluded to move closer to the labour market by improving their access to local employment and skills provision. **Please note that no profit can be made through grants issued within the Community Grants Programme.**

Grants will provide support to the hardest to reach communities and individuals, especially those from deprived communities and long term unemployed/economically inactive adults, to access employment or further learning and training. Small third sector organisations that access grants are likely to be well placed to reach excluded individuals facing barriers, which hinder their access to mainstream provision. The payment schedule for successful grant recipients is shown below:

- 33% upfront after an executed Grant Agreement* see note on page 11;
- 33% in the middle of your project subject to a satisfactory audit from the Project Team, and;
- 34% at the end of your profile when the targets have been achieved and all financial and performance evidence has been checked and approved by Hartlepool Borough Council.

All awarded projects must complete their project activities and report their agreed outcomes and results **no later than 31st July 2022**, but must evidence in their grant application how the required outcomes will be achieved in the project timeframe

Funded Activities

ESF funded programmes are subject to a strict set of regulations which must be adhered to. It's important for organisations who are applying for funding to understand that funding will not be provided for ineligible activities, and that failure to provide timely monitoring information of the project activities and participants will result in the withholding of grant payments. Organisations must also be able to provide evidence of all costs incurred in delivering your project.

Hartlepool Borough Council has experience of managing ESF projects and will be able to support organisations to provide the required information and to ensure that only eligible activities are funded. The Council has made a range of template forms available to organisations that are successful in applying for funding, to enable them to provide the necessary project monitoring data.

The following costs in delivering your proposed project are eligible for ESF funding:

- Staff costs (where not already funded through other sources).
- Running costs of the project (e.g. stationery, room hire, marketing and publicity costs etc.) You will need to show how the costs have been calculated and all expenditure needs to be solely for the purposes of the programme and defrayed through your Bank Account.
- Skills training and other course costs.
- Capital purchases under £1000 (i.e. small capital items in line with ESF guidance – a computer, monitor, keyboard, printer and software counts as one item). You will need to explain why this item is necessary in order for you to deliver the project.
- Costs directly associated with the participant's involvement in the project for example, travel costs, dependent care costs while taking part in project activities. You will need keep evidence including receipts for all expenditure showing defrayment through your Bank Account.

All evidence relating to the delivery of the Community Grant must be safely retained by the Grant Recipient until such time as Hartlepool Borough Council's dedicated ESF Community Grant Project Team issues notification that it is no longer required for audit and monitoring purposes. This is required as the grant funding will receive audits and monitoring checks by the accountable body, funder and European Auditors.

The following costs are examples of items ineligible for ESF funding:

- Core costs of running your organisation other than those directly associated with delivery of the project.
- Any costs not directly associated with the running of the grant funded project or which are not solely for the purposes of your project.
- Any costs that have been incurred (invoiced or payment made from your bank account) before the start date on your project if your application is successful – i.e. we are unable to support costs you have already incurred.
- Any costs incurred after the end date shown on your grant agreement.
- Any costs that cannot be fully evidenced back to your organisation's nominated project bank account or that do not meet the evidence

requirements, e.g. invoices not made out to your organisation or payments not agreed.

- Any bank charges or legal fees.
- Volunteer time cannot be funded through the project.
- Items which only benefit individuals; for example bursaries, prizes and gift vouchers.
- Activities promoting religious beliefs or political activities.
- Activities that the State has a legal obligation to provide e.g. education.
- Fundraising activities for your organisation or any other group or activity.
- Contingency costs.

All activities must complement and avoid duplication with other provision, thereby adding value to programmes funded/supported by organisations such as Department for Work and Pensions, Big Lottery, ESFA and add value to initiatives such as Youth Employment Initiative, Routes to Work, Local Authority, National Careers Service and the Careers Enterprise Company funded services.

Successful candidates will be required to ensure that ESF funded services will clearly add value and not duplicate any delivery that can be arranged locally through existing mainstream institutions.

Basic Requirement and Standards

To safeguard the grant funding, eligible recipient organisations must evidence that they have the following standards in place before any grant is received:

Legal Structure

A legal structure that is appropriate to the size and nature of the organisation, set out in a constitution or memorandum & articles of association that clearly outlines the aims and rules governing the organisation.

Accounts

All recipient organisations must have prepared and maintained accounting records. Based on simplified Charity Commission guidelines, accounts appropriate to the size and nature of the organisation are required as detailed in the table below:

Organisations whose annual gross income or total expenditure is less than £10k	Organisations whose annual gross income or total expenditure is over £10k but less than £100k	Organisations whose annual gross income or total expenditure is over £100k but less than £500k	Organisations whose annual gross income or total expenditure is over £500k
Signed annual receipts and payments accounts (income and expenditure and statement of assets and liabilities at end of the year).	Signed annual receipts and payments accounts (income and expenditure and statement of assets and liabilities at end of the year).	Signed accruals accounts.	Signed accruals accounts.

No external scrutiny required.	External scrutiny required (audit if organisation's constitution specifies).	External scrutiny required (audit if organisation's constitution specifies).	Full external audit by a registered auditor.
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Organisations that are newly established and whom may not meet the financial accounting requirements as set out in the table above (Due to not having operated for one year) should contact Hartlepool Borough Council ESF Project Team prior to submitting an application form and you would need to provide references from professional bodies such as commissioners or funders. This will enable the Project Team to seek clarification from the relevant organisation on what systems and practices are in place relating to accounting, finance and performance and to advise accordingly on the robustness of these systems in line with ESF requirements.

Financial Management

Preparation of regular budget for the overall organisation and any associated projects. Have in place procedures that enable the trustees to undertake their legal obligation to monitor income and expenditure on a regular basis (i.e. quarterly financial reporting as a minimum).

Equal Opportunities

Adoption and implementation of an equal opportunities statement or policy that reflects current legislation, including the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, Sex Discrimination Act 1975, Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Human Rights Act 1998 and provide appropriate training for trustees, staff and volunteers.

Employment

Comply with all employment law including legislation on stakeholder pensions (if appropriate). Demonstrate good practice in personnel matters by having clear policies and procedures.

Insurance

Ensure that appropriate insurance certification and licences are in place. For example, employer's liability, public liability and professional indemnity cover in place for the organisation.

Confidentiality

All organisations are expected to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998 and General Data Protection Regulations 2016 where personal records are kept, personal services, advice & counselling are being provided, organisations will be expected to have a written policy of confidentiality.

Health & Safety

Organisations who receive financial investment, or in-kind support must meet legal requirements under current Health and Safety regulations. In particular statutory obligations covering employees, volunteers and members of the public and buildings. For example, carrying out risk assessments and having fire certificates where appropriate.

Safeguarding and Prevent

Organisations must maintain a proper focus on safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults, and this must be reflected both in sound individual practice

and in our internal policies and guidance. Organisations which provide services that involve access to, or having contact with, children up to the age of 18 years to meet the statutory requirements under the Protection of Children Act 1989.

To ensure that it has in place protection and prevention of abuse and child protection policies consistent with the Tees Safeguarding Children Board procedure manual as amended from time to time and will ensure compliance with these policies.

Where applicable the organisation will ensure staff are recruited and employed in line with Safer Recruitment Practices and receive appropriate training in safeguarding, including allegation management, in line with Tees Children Board guidance (see www.teescpp.org.uk).

Organisations are to be aware of their responsibilities towards vulnerable adults within their service provision and to have a policy and guidelines for the protection of vulnerable adults. Where applicable, the organisation shall have policies and procedures in place that comply with Tees Safeguarding Adults Boards (see www.tsab.org.uk/) recommendations.

This also incorporates your Prevent Duty; which is incorporated within the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 which contains a duty on specified authorities to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

Monitoring & Evaluation

As outlined in the introduction, the ESF monitoring requirements are stringent, and failure to adhere to them will result in grant payments being withheld. All projects will need to maintain records for each participant in your project which will comprise the following:

- Evidence that participants are eligible for funding from the Community Grants Programme (Eligibility criteria are that the participant is legally resident in the UK, able to take paid employment in a European Member State, aged 16 years or older, unemployed or economically inactive, resident of the Tees Valley and that activity takes place in England).
- Evidence to support a robust initial assessment, including impartial Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) has taken place and outcomes to be recorded on an Individual Learning Plan (ILP).
- Evidence that an induction has taken place and it includes a narrative outlining the contribution from ESF.
- Individual Learner Record (ILR) to cover all details required in the ILR specification, Evidence that an ILP is in place which details all learning activities, outcome of initial assessment etc.
- Where relevant, evidence confirming registration of each awarding body where accredited learning is being delivered.
- Evidence of attendance records and progress reviews which should take place at regular intervals.
- Progression evidence to substantiate the learner moving into employment, education or further learning which meets the ESF Specifications Deliverables Evidence Requirements.

Please note that Hartlepool Borough Council will provide templates and support to enable you to provide this information.

Marketing and Publicity

The European Social Fund takes publicity and branding very seriously, and sets out minimum requirements which each project must comply with within the ESF Branding and Publicity Guidance. Successful applicants will need to display an A3 ESF Poster using the template provided and will have access to the ESF logo and detailed guidance on the use of the logo in all marketing and publicity materials. For more information please read the ESF Branding and Publicity Guidance or speak to the ESF Project Team.

How to apply for ESF Community Grants

Complete the application form and submit this to the ESF Project Team along with the required supporting documents outlined in the application by the submission deadline dates (Which will be available on Hartlepool Borough Council's website). Please note that applications must be typed.

To provide potential applicant's with additional support, please find overleaf notes on how to complete your application form.

Assessment Process

On receipt of your application, the following stages will be followed:

- **Stage 1:** Hartlepool Borough Council's ESF Community Grants Project Team will make an initial assessment of your application to ensure that all relevant information is available, that the organisation is eligible for the funding and to undertake a due diligence check and to check if all relevant policies and systems are in place to meet the requirements of ESF Funding Rules. If an organisation's application cannot be progressed at this stage, then they will be notified of the reasons why.
- **Stage 2:** The Grants Awards Panel, consisting of representatives from the five Tees Valley Local Authorities, will meet and a final decision on your application will be made. The Grant Awards Panel will meet within three weeks of the relevant closing date. The organisation will be notified of the outcome of this decision (The ESF Community Grants Assessment Framework is available on the Council's website which explains how each individual application will be assessed).

Further Information

Hartlepool Borough Council's dedicated ESF Community Grants Project Team are available to discuss any questions relating to your proposed application and can be contacted via:

Email: ESF.CommunityGrants@hartlepool.gov.uk

Notes on Completing the Application Form

SECTION 1. ORGANISATION DETAILS

Please provide the name of your organisation and contact details. It is helpful if you can provide a daytime telephone number so that you can be contacted to discuss the application if there is a query.

Please provide details about your organisation, including the type of organisation you are, the criteria your organisation meets in relation to ESF grant eligibility, which area your organisation operates within the Tees Valley and the number of full time equivalent staff members involved.

SECTION 2. DUE DILIGENCE

Please provide a list of names and position held of each of the Directors/Trustees of the organisation matching to Companies House or The Charity Commission UK.

SECTION 3. ELIGIBILITY

You will need to confirm all sections of the eligibility criteria to enable this application to be taken to panel and be evaluated by the ESF Community Grants team.

SECTION 4 - 8. PROJECT SUMMARY

This section of the form asks you to describe in detail what you want to do with the grant. Be as specific as possible about what it is you are hoping to achieve and how this will be done. Please show how your planned activities will benefit your target group(s). Projects must be delivered in areas facing economic and social deprivation, so please include evidence to demonstrate this, and cite the source of the evidence, e.g. Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2015.

Please explain the benefits and outcomes that your project will achieve, including which target group(s) you will work with. This should be both with reference to those outcomes outlined in the ESF Community Grants prospectus, and any wider outcomes you plan to achieve. Your project must contribute to the ESF Community Grant key deliverables being achieved. The key deliverables are shown below:

Deliverable	Volume	Amount
ST01 Learner Assessment and Plan	2,105	-
CG01 Community Grant Payment	-	£2,700,000
PG01 Progression into Employment	356	-
PG03 Progression into Education	295	-

The table below shows the split of deliverables against each Local Authority:

Local Authority	Starts (Learner Assessment & Plan)	Progression into Employment	Progression into Education
Darlington	308	52	43
Hartlepool	490	83	68
Middlesbrough	466	79	65
Redcar & Cleveland	313	53	44
Stockton on Tees	528	89	75
TOTAL	2,105	356	295

The amount of Grants available for each Local Authority area is shown within the table below.

Local Authority	% of the Project	Value of Grants Available £
Darlington	14.65%	395,550
Hartlepool	23.27%	628,290
Middlesbrough	22.14%	597,780
Redcar & Cleveland	14.88%	401,760
Stockton on Tees	25.06%	676,620
TOTAL	100%	£2,700,000

Please note the targets and grant available within each area is subject to change.

Within this section, please state the start and end date of your project and tell us how you plan to publicise your project, particularly how you will make your target participants aware of it. We are particularly interested in how projects will effectively target priority groups such as Over 50s and Ethnic groups and long term unemployed adults.

Please explain how your project will be delivered sustainably, both from an environmental perspective, and in terms of any lasting legacy your project will have. Tell us where the project activity will be carried out, and explain how you have determined that this is a suitable environment for the planned activity. During the course of the project, Hartlepool Borough Council will visit this location to ensure it is suitable.

Please explain how you will ensure that your project does not duplicate existing provision and instead adds value to current provision? This question is very important as ESF must not displace existing provision.

Please outline the risks you have identified in delivering your project and what mitigation you will put in place to manage them. It is essential that you clearly inform how the funding will be effectively managed and how your project will deliver all of the proposed starts and outcomes within the prescribed delivery schedule timescales.

SECTION 9 - 18. COMPLIANCE, MONITORING & EVALUATION

In this section you are required to tell us how you will ensure that you will meet the ESF monitoring requirements. You should explain what process you will put in place to ensure these requirements are met.

If your project involves accredited learning, please provide your registration number and certificate for the relevant awarding Body.

It is important that you highlight what measures you will have in place to monitor and report to your internal stakeholders, i.e. Committee Members, on the actual financial spend, performance to date and quality standards.

SECTION 19 – 20 – FINANCIAL DETAILS OF THE PROJECT

This section of the form asks you to provide information about the costs of your project or activity and an overview summary of the breakdown of costs.

1. Employees (staff budget) - staff who are currently on the payroll and are employed by your organisation
2. Freelance costs – including external tutors, project delivery, administration etc.
3. Other Costs – Venue hire, accreditation, marketing, stationery and participant expenses, agreed apportionment of office/running costs.
4. Capital purchases NB: The amount must not exceed £1,000 per item and the total should be within a guide of 10% of overall costs. Two separate quotes must be provided for each capital item (NB: second hand items are ineligible).

When calculating your project budget, it is critical that you consider the viability of your project and consider whether you can deliver the activity based on the payment schedule of:

- 33% upfront payment after an executed Grant Agreement *
- 33% paid in the middle of your project as long as a satisfactory audit has been completed by the Project Team and
- 34% at the end of your profile when all financial and performance evidence has been checked and approved by Hartlepool Borough Council and the targets have been achieved.

***NB:** The ESFCG Project Team will seek out a financial risk assessment of your organisation. If this identifies that the financial risk is assessed as greater than 'low', or where the organisation is less than 12 months old, an advance payment of 33% will not be available. In such cases we would pay the first 33% on a 'monthly in arrears' basis, following receipt of evidence showing eligible project activity and expenditure.

This section of the form asks you to provide information about your finances such as your latest set of accounts. This section must be completed, please do not just write a statement referring the assessment panel to your accounts as your application will be rejected.

Please tell us about your reserves, how much you have in reserves and what they are for. Please remember to provide a copy of your reserves policy, if applicable.

SECTION 21 – 24 FURTHER INFORMATION

This section of the form asks you to provide further information on the policies and procedures the organisation already has in place along with confirmation of insurance being held.

SECTION 25 – 26. DECLARATION & ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS TO ENCLOSE

Please complete the declaration by providing your name, position in the organisation and date.

Please make sure that you have the following documents which must be submitted along with your application:-

- Your Constitution or Articles of Association
- The last year's authorised accounts
- Recent bank statement
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Information Security Policy
- Safeguarding and Prevent Policy and Procedures
- Health & Safety Policy and Procedures
- Public Liability and Employers Liability Insurance
- Professional Indemnity Insurance
- Reserves Policy (If applicable)
- If you have applied for funding to purchase capital equipment, include two separate relevant quotes for each capital equipment asked for
- Registration Number and Certificate for Accredited Learning (If you intend to offer this).

Appendix A – Policy checking tool
Guidance for the minimum requirements of policies

Health and Safety Policy		
Section	Specific guidance on what to check	<input type="checkbox"/>
Statement	Should set out the commitment to managing health and safety effectively	
Responsibilities	Should set out who is responsible for specific actions and identify who has overall responsibility for Health and Safety	
Arrangements	Set out as a <u>minimum</u> , risk assessments, RIDDOR, first aiders, fire safety, training, resolution and planning and control	
References	Should refer to Health and Safety Executive (HSE)	
Effective Dates	Ensure that an effective from date is present and signed off and ensure review date has not passed	
Safeguarding Policy		
Section	Specific guidance on what to check	<input type="checkbox"/>
Statement	Should set out the commitment to ensuring safety of vulnerable adults including the Prevent Duty	
Responsibilities	Should set out the responsibilities of key staff and identify the Designated Person with overall responsibility for safeguarding	
Arrangements	Set out as a <u>minimum</u> , , responding, training, record keeping and link to relevant Local Safeguarding Board	
Definitions	Should provide a definition of “vulnerable adult” and definitions of different types of “abuse”	
References	Should include details of Local Safeguarding Board, with attention to The Care Act 2014	
Effective Dates	Ensure that an effective from date is present and signed off and ensure review date has not passed	
Equality and Diversity Policy		
Section	Specific guidance on what to check	<input type="checkbox"/>
Statement	Should set out the commitment to ensuring fairness and equality of opportunity	
Responsibilities	Should set out responsibilities for key staff including the person responsible for implementation of the policy	
Arrangements	Set out as a <u>minimum</u> , recruitment and selection, training, promotion and treatment of all staff	
Definitions	Define “protected groups” and “types of discrimination”	
References	Should refer to the Equality Act 2010	
Effective Dates	Ensure that an effective from date is present and signed off and ensure review date has not passed	
GDPR		
Section	Specific guidance on what to check	<input type="checkbox"/>
Statement	Should set out the commitment to ensuring the integration of GDPR	
Responsibilities	Should set out responsibilities for key staff including the person responsible for implementation of the policy	
Arrangements	Set out as a minimum escalation for data breaches AND registering with the ICO	
References	Should refer to the GDPR regulations 2018	
Effective Dates	Ensure that an effective from date is present and signed off and ensure review date has not passed	