

Dorset Community Foundation – Grant Making Policy

FINAL

1. Introduction

The Foundation exists to benefit local communities by making grants to support relevant charitable or voluntary organisations, which make a difference to their local communities. We ensure these organisations and their beneficiaries are appropriate and their aims meet our objectives. The groups we support deliver benefit to their communities in many different ways, they make no payment for our services and no relevant groups are excluded from our application process. We also exist to support individuals via a small number of funding programmes. The Foundation's area of benefit is the county of Dorset, including Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole.

The Foundation manages different types of funds to support its grant-making objectives:

- Endowment Funds – providing a sustainable source of funding in perpetuity with a grant allocation agreed every year to be distributed
- Revenue Funds – flow-through funds that are usually distributed within an agreed timescale
- Contracted Funds – grant programmes we deliver on behalf of other funders or organisations

Each funding programme has its own set of criteria in addition to our general guidance about the types of organisations we support and our general exclusions (see below)

2. Eligibility

The Foundation awards grants to individuals and registered charities and organisations that can demonstrate their charitable purposes.

Organisations that can apply:

- Registered Charities
- Constituted Community and Voluntary Organisations
- Community Interest Companies that are Limited by Guarantee (see additional guidance in Appendix 1)
- Social Enterprises (Companies limited by guarantee that have a clear not-for-profit clause in their governing document and clear charitable or social objectives that meet the priorities of the funding programme)

To be eligible the organisation must have:

- A management committee, Board of Trustees or Board of Directors with at least 3 unrelated people as members
- A written constitution or governing document that sets out the purpose and management of the organisation
- A bank account in the name of the organisation with at least two unrelated cheque signatories required for payments

We will prioritise small, grassroots charities and community organisations over larger local organisations that have a higher profile. We do not support national charities but can support local branches of national charities, if they are financially independent and locally managed.

Applicants can apply to more than one grant programme throughout the year however, if they are already in receipt of a grant, they are a lower priority for funding. An organisation cannot be in receipt of more than one grant from the same Funding Programme, or for the same project/service concurrently. This is to ensure that:

- the Foundation is reaching as many groups as possible through its funding and not only appealing to those organisations who have previously been funded
- previously funded organisations have submitted an end of grant form and the Foundation can be confident that the grant funding has been spent as required

3. Exclusions

Grants *will not* be awarded to the following types of activity or organisations:

- Public bodies to carry out their statutory obligations
- The promotion of religion or political causes
- Retrospective funding – grants for work that has already started or been completed
- Animal welfare organisations

Grants *will not normally* be awarded to the following types of activity or organisations:

- Organisations operating outside Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole
- Organisations with more than 12 months' unrestricted reserves
- Organisations previously funded with an overdue end of grant form
- Medical research & equipment
- Large capital projects, general large appeals, sponsored and fundraising events
- Salary or fees of professional fundraisers
- Projects duplicating an existing service
- One-off events with limited longer-term benefit

4. Funding Programmes

We run open funding programmes, which are advertised on our website, mailing list and through our networks with cross-sector colleagues. We also run solicited funding programmes, to which applicants must be invited to apply. This is usually where a Fund has limited funds to award and having an open application process would lead to the overwhelming majority of applications being unsuccessful and create a capacity issue for the Foundation. DCF will select those groups who will be invited to apply based on:

- The Grants manager's knowledge and expertise as the DCF appointed member of staff with responsibility for selecting groups for solicited programmes
- Consideration of the Fundholders wishes and suggestions, and on seeking advice from relevant cross-sector contacts where appropriate

Grants are typically available for one year and the grant size varies depending on the criteria of the grant programme.

5. Grant Application Process for Organisations

- The Foundation encourages applicants to discuss their project request prior to application.
- All requests for funding must be submitted on an online application form (excluding Donor Advised grants of less than £1000 in certain circumstances, detailed further below).
- Online application forms require organisations to set out the details of their project, how it will be delivered, a breakdown of the project budget, how they have identified the need and how they will measure and report back on project outcomes.
- In cases where organisations have difficulty with the online process then we may accept hard copy versions of the application process.
- On receipt of the application the Foundation carries out an assessment, including eligibility, due diligence checks based on the supporting documents supplied, and the fit of the project to the criteria for the relevant grant programme. Due diligence may not be completed if undertaken in the last 12 months, although recent accounts should still be reviewed.
- Ineligible applications do not proceed to a decision-making panel or to the Fundholder, as appropriate. Eligible applications are recommended as High, Medium or Low priority.
- If the funding programme is significantly oversubscribed, DCF reserves the right to shortlist the strongest applications for consideration by the panel or Fundholder, at the discretion of the Grants Manager.
- A grant is only payable on receipt of signed Terms and Conditions.
- We require groups to submit an End of Grant monitoring form at the end of the grant period.

In all cases funding decisions are signed off by a DCF Trustee.

6. Grant Application Process for Individuals

- The Foundation encourages applicants to discuss their project request prior to application.
- The application process for individuals will vary depending on the grant programme but will typically include completing an online application form and submitting letters of support from relevant bodies or professionals.
- On receipt of the application the Foundation carries out an assessment, including eligibility and how the individual fits the criteria of the funding programme. The assessment process may involve a third party organisation verifying that an applicant has met the criteria, including proof of income; permission to share information will be requested.
- Ineligible applications do not proceed to a decision-making panel or to the Fundholder, as appropriate. Eligible applications are recommended as High, Medium or Low priority.
- If the funding programme is significantly oversubscribed, DCF reserves the right to shortlist the strongest applications for consideration by the panel or Fundholder, at the discretion of the Grants Manager
- A grant is only payable on receipt of signed Terms and Conditions.
- We may use a variety of ways to make payment to an individual applicant. These could include paying a Further Education College or other professional body directly for agreed costs, paying the applicant directly, or purchasing items online to be sent to the applicant.
- Receipts as proof of purchase may be required from applicants.
- We ask individuals to provide updates and feedback following the grant and may send a feedback form at a relevant time, for their completion.
- Applicants will not be considered for further funding until they have responded to any requests for updates or feedback regarding the previous grant.

In all cases funding decisions are signed off by a DCF Trustee.

7. Grant Panels

Where the grant programme has its own grant panel

- Each panel comprises two Foundation trustees (one acts as the panel Chair) and other members of the community who bring their expertise and knowledge of particular communities whether geographical or communities of interest.
- An assessment summary of all eligible and shortlisted applications, with recommendations put forward by the Foundation's Grants Manager, are considered by the panel. The recommendation by the Grants Manager is for guidance only.
- Decisions are made by a majority vote with the Chair of the Panel having the deciding vote in the case where there is no majority. The panel decision is final.
- In the event that only one trustee is available, the panel decisions must be agreed by another trustee following the meeting before awards can be confirmed.
- In the event that an applicant withdraws their application after the panel decision has been made, the Chair, in consultation with the other panel members, can agree to award the grant to another applicant.
- Requests to amend an application or change the terms of the grant after the panel decision has taken place will be considered by the Grants Manager and Panel Chair, in consultation with other panel members as appropriate.

8. Donor Advised grants

Fundholders will receive a copy of the DCF Grant-making policy and are reminded that whilst we offer flexibility for Fundholders in terms of the impact they are hoping to achieve through their Fund, as a leading local funder all grants made by the Foundation should remain consistent with the policy in order to reflect the prestige and integrity of the organisation.

As such, in the case of solicited funding programmes, Fundholders may suggest groups that could be invited to apply. However, DCF cannot invite an application from a group who is ineligible according to the Grant-Making policy, or where there are concerns regarding previous Due Diligence checks or grants.

Fundholders who wish to be involved in the decision-making process (as opposed to delegating decision-making to a DCF panel) can either sit as a member of the panel or request a Donor Advised arrangement, following the below process:

- An assessment summary of all eligible applications, with recommendations put forward by the Foundation's Grants Manager, are shared with the Fundholder.
- The Fundholder shares their preferred decisions with the Grants Manager.
- Grants are made in line with the Fundholders wishes unless there are concerns regarding the organisation or the application, which should be brought to the attention of the Grants & Impact Committee before the grant concerned is processed.
- DCF Trustees are responsible for all grants made by DCF and it may not always be possible to follow the wishes of Fundholders, although this is rare.

We offer a more streamlined process for Donor Advised grants of less than £1000, to organisations who have previously been funded by DCF, and where satisfactory Due Diligence checks have been completed in the last 12 months. (The agreed contribution to DCF Core Costs may not be deducted from these smaller donations.) The process for these grants is as follows:

- Donor to confirm the group/s to whom they would like to make a grant and any restrictions for expenditure.
- DCF to request a letter of request from the group, to include how they will spend funds.
- Group to write a letter of request to DCF.
- Grant is payable on receipt of signed Terms and Conditions.

9. Notifying applicants of the panel decisions

- All applicants are notified of the panel decision within one week of the panel meeting.
- Unsuccessful applicants receive feedback about the main reasons why their application was not successful with any relevant signposting to other funding advice or grant programmes.
- Successful applicants are required to sign grant Terms and Conditions before payment by BACS can be made.
- Successful applicants are required to record grants awarded by DCF in their annual accounts.

10. Project evaluation and monitoring

- The Foundation has implemented the UKCF Outcomes Framework to support the Foundation to better demonstrate the impact of its funding which is vital to attract new funding.
- It is also a requirement that successful applicants follow our PR and logo guidelines when promoting their projects.
- The Foundation carries out formal monitoring visits of the projects it has funded and has a target of carrying out monitoring visits with a minimum of 10% of projects funded per year. These visits may be carried out by Foundation staff, Trustees, Ambassadors and grant panel members and will assess the progress made against the project application and identified outcomes. We require groups to be transparent about the progress of their funded project and about the organisation as a whole, including questions about Safeguarding policy, any recent Safeguarding incidents and how procedures were followed (without identifying the beneficiaries involved).
- If a project is not progressing satisfactorily or there is an under-spend at the end of the project then these monies must be returned to the Foundation unless a revised project budget and timeframe have been agreed in writing by the Foundation before the end of the grant period.
- The Foundation is keen to give active support to organisations where possible.

11. Feedback from applicants and Complaints Policy

- The Foundation welcomes feedback from all applicants on our application process and we are continually looking at ways to make improvements to ensure that the process is efficient and effective but also supports applicants through the process.
- There is a feedback section on all application forms, and we take account of all comments from applicants.
- In the event that an applicant is not satisfied with the service or advice that has been provided by the Foundation then they can make a complaint following the Complaints Procedure which is available on the homepage of the Foundation's website.

For more information about submitting an application or any information contained in this policy please contact the Grants Manager, Ellie Maguire at grants@dorsetcf.org or on 01202 670815.

Appendix 1 Additional criteria for Community Interest Companies

Criteria	Demonstrated by:
Must be registered with the Office of the Regulator of CICs and must be Limited by Guarantee.	Companies House records
Must have objectives that show clear community benefit.	CIC 36/37 Public Benefit Statement
Must have a sound business model where 50% or more is earned through trading, unless the CIC is less than 3 years old or is able to demonstrate why this is not achievable.	Recent accounts
Salaries and benefits paid to directors must be reasonable and proportionate to the work that they do and the financial position of the organisation, in order to prioritise the services/activities being delivered.	Recent accounts or financial forecast (for new CICs) Note: we may ask for additional information if there is not a breakdown of income and expenditure in the accounts/financial forecast Note: we may ask what factors the Directors consider when setting salaries
CICs where Directors have significant control that enables them to overrule other Directors in decision-making, are ineligible	Companies House records

Appendix 2 List of Supporting Documents required by organisations submitting applications

Document	Why do we need it?
Constitution/Memorandum of Articles and Association	Demonstrates that an organisation has some form of rules about how it is governed.
Annual Accounts	These can be audited or independently examined accounts or an income/expenditure spreadsheet depending on the size of the organisation. Demonstrates the financial position of the organisation regarding income, expenditure, loans, liabilities etc. New organisations without annual accounts may submit a financial forecast as an alternative.
Bank statement	Demonstrates that the organisation has a bank account in their name, and we can confirm bank account details. Important that it shows account name, sort code and account number clearly.
Safeguarding Policies/Equal Opportunities	To demonstrate that the organisation has robust policies in place.