



Fact Sheet

An introduction to grants

Details of organisations mentioned in this factsheet are listed in *Useful Contacts*.

Grants fall loosely into two main categories: public money and charitable trusts. There is a bewildering array of grants and they are changing all the time. If you are new to grants, start with some smaller, less complicated grant schemes suggested by your local CVS or council; don't get 'bogged' down in time consuming research.

Be realistic about how long it will take to secure grants, as most grant schemes take several months to make a decision and you need to allow time for applying for other grants if you are not successful. Also bear in mind that obtaining planning permission, booking contractors and buying materials always takes longer than anticipated.

Aim to build a relationship with anybody that awards you a grant, free materials or service: invite them to open days and other events and send them photos and publicity material from your project.

Where to look for public funding (government grants)

It is tempting to start your research by asking 'what grants are available?' Don't. Instead, ask yourself 'who is likely to be running relevant grant schemes?' Most public funds are contracted out to regional or local government bodies, or voluntary service deliverers to run. Rather than trying to keep track of the constantly changing community and regeneration investment programmes, obtain updates from your CVS and the bodies listed below on what is currently available.

National funders, especially the lottery, often hold workshops on how to apply for their grants combined with general funding advice. Contact local offices for more information.

Primary Care Trusts

An increasing number of Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) run small grants schemes, e.g. as part of Health Action Zones, Five a Day and Community Chests. Grants are typically small (£500 - £3,000), easy to apply for and fund small scale community-led projects which contribute to improving the health of local people. Criteria may focus on healthy living or healthy eating projects, schemes to increase physical activity or facilities for disabled people.

Some PCTs have a community development/liasion officer who can advise on the grant scheme.

Local authority grant schemes

Many local authorities have a department that can provide information about their own grant schemes (if they have any) and some general information about funding.

Typically grants are quite small (around £500) and quick and easy to apply for. Do a search on 'grants' or 'funding' on your council's website or phone your council and ask for the community grants officer (who may also be called the community regeneration team, funding officer, community resources, community development unit, or voluntary support worker).

Also ask the allotment officer and sustainability officer whether there are any suitable grant schemes available.



Community safety grant schemes are currently available and are usually administered by your local authority's community safety team. Grants are typically £500 - £2,000 and are awarded to voluntary groups to tackle crime and disorder in their area, e.g. through security fencing and lights, as well as activities for young people aimed at reducing youth nuisance.

If your local authority area is one of the 88 most deprived authorities identified by the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund there may be funds for projects aimed at preventing drugs misuse and crime, creating jobs, improving education, health and housing. Contact the local authority's neighbourhood renewal team.

Keep an eye out for results of local authorities/councils comprehensive performance assessments (CPA) – these often force councils to give out funding where service delivery has failed.

Police Authority

If your local authority does not have a community safety grants scheme, contact your police authority and see if it is administered there. There may be a community safety partnership that can advise on safety measures.

County councils

County councils may have anywhere between one and twenty community grant schemes, with themes ranging from biodiversity, sustainability, urban regeneration, arts, play areas, disabled facilities, community building renovation, to neighbourhood safety. Grant schemes are funded from a range of sources, e.g. the European Social Fund or Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.

If your county council administers many grants it will have a funding officer (usually based in economic development) or you can do a search on 'grants' on their website.

The Big Lottery Fund

The New Opportunities Fund and the Community Fund have now merged to form the Big Lottery Fund. The Big Lottery

Fund will focus on community transformation, from smaller grants at local level through to big capital projects. Several grant schemes are currently running but many are not yet finalised: check the website or phone your regional office for the latest information.

Awards for All, part of the Big Lottery Fund, is a small grants scheme particularly suitable for newly formed groups or those new to grants, and is easy to apply for with a fast 'turnaround' (8 weeks from application).

Grant schemes administered by voluntary sector organisations

Occasionally CVSs administer certain grant schemes, e.g. Community Chests. Groundwork, BTCV, FCFCG and other environmental organisations have also managed grant schemes in the past.

Government Offices

Generally only manage grant schemes geared towards large-scale community partnerships. They do manage some Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) funds, e.g. 'Safer and Stronger Communities Fund'.

European grant sources

The European Social Fund's grant programmes focus on reducing unemployment, improving and developing the skills of employed people, investing in industrial or rural areas that are in decline and investing in areas with low economic development.

Most of the grant programmes are suitable only for large organisations or partnerships, although very occasionally there are smaller grants schemes: contact your regional government office.

Regional Development Agencies (RDAs)

Generally more geared to economic development and grants for businesses rather than community development. Some RDAs, e.g. Advantage West Midlands, have had some involvement in community development and so may be worth contacting.

Other sources

- Landfill Tax Credit Scheme, if you live less than 10 miles from a landfill.
- Coalfield Regeneration Trust, if you live in a former coalfield community.

See *Grant schemes relevant to allotments* for more information.

Where to look for charitable trust funding

Grant-making trusts and foundations give about £2 billion in grants to charities in the UK each year, about the same as the total of grants given to charities by the UK government.

There are almost 10,000 UK grant-making trusts: larger trusts distribute several million pounds each year but the vast majority are smaller and more likely to give out a few thousand. Some may give funds to any charitable purpose, whilst others are restricted to specific subjects (e.g. education or the arts) or beneficiary groups (e.g. children or the elderly).

Most trusts derive their income from an endowment given by a wealthy individual, family or company, e.g. the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust. Some trusts receive their income from other sources, e.g. TV appeals like Children in Need or Comic Relief.

Researching Trusts

There are two computer packages called Grantfinder and Funderfinder, which allow you to search for charitable trusts that fit with your project proposal. Most CVSs will allow you to book a session to use one of these and will explain how it works: otherwise try your local authority grants office or library.

The Directory of Grant Making Trusts allows you to research grant bodies and criteria without using a computer but is a more time consuming approach. The Directory is updated annually; the most recent copy should be available in all main or reference libraries. It is not worth buying a copy as it is a huge book and dates very quickly.

There may be a directory of grant

schemes or funding guide available for your city or area, produced by your CVS, local authority or even county council. These are often updated annually, or even every six months, as they date quickly. Do not bother using a copy that is more than two years old; it will be too out of date.

Focus on charitable trusts based in or specific to your local area, and which have funding criteria relevant to your project. Try to obtain a list of trustees and see what you can find out about these locally, some of your plottolders may even know a trustee. Trustees often have particular interests or favourite causes and are more likely to give support to a cause they have heard about or observed first-hand. These trusts are generally more appropriate to the needs of small, local organisations, whereas the bigger trusts tend to fund larger, national initiatives.

Community Foundations

Community foundations are a relatively new kind of grant-making trust. They are set up in a local area to act as a broker for donors, usually building an endowment for future income. Increasingly they are acting as a distributor of government funding as well as charitable money.

About 90% of the UK population has access to a community foundation; contact the Community Foundation Network to find your nearest one.

The type of grants and criteria vary from region to region, but the overall theme is "community based philanthropy". Many foundations can also help to guide you through the application procedure.

Is your project proposal eligible for grants?

Applying to grant schemes when your project does not fit the criteria wastes both your time and the funding body's. Criteria of grant schemes vary considerably so check carefully that your organisation and your project proposal are eligible to apply. Phone the grant body if in doubt. Again, do not alter your proposal just to fit the criteria, as this rarely works.

Some grant bodies will say that allotments

are not eligible because they only benefit individuals. If you know that your project genuinely has benefits to the wider community, explain these, as you may find that your project is then eligible.

Grant schemes that give out smaller awards (less than £500), such as the local government regeneration, healthy living or crime prevention schemes are usually less prescriptive. Generally though, to apply for charitable grants you will have to work out how your allotments could benefit the community *beyond* your members (see *Widening the benefits of allotments* in this pack).

Site improvements that only benefit the members

Are you trying to fund infrastructure improvements to your site, e.g. a new fence, toilet or water supply? Project work that only benefits members is generally not eligible for grants, because it does not benefit the wider community. A grant body would expect the costs to be paid for by council subsidy or by the members (plotters) rather than by charitable funds.

Whether the council will pay for improvements depends on how many other essential services are vying for taxpayers' money. If they tell you they have no money, take matters into your hands and fundraise, rather than wasting energy in lobbying them. If you go back to the council later, asking them to match-fund money you have already secured, they are more likely to respond positively.

If plotters really want an improved site, they should be prepared to pay for at least a portion of the cost, whether it's by a contribution of their labour in getting the work done, a donation, separate subscription or rental increase.

Attracting new members

Some grant schemes are happy to fund infrastructure improvements that simply attract more members (plotters), especially if you are genuinely attracting types of people who are currently under-represented or disadvantaged. The Lottery's Awards for All has funded a number of such proposals in the past.

'Inclusiveness'

Many grant schemes are looking for evidence of 'inclusiveness': projects that encourage involvement from everyone, regardless of race, colour, gender, physical abilities and so on. Allotment sites often already have a good cross-section of people. Consider constructing a profile of the existing plot holders, to demonstrate to funders the areas in which inclusiveness is already being delivered – spontaneously.

It is not enough to just 'push the buttons' and reel off long lists of minorities who might benefit from the allotment site: you need to think about whether there are barriers preventing those people from getting involved or ways in which you are unintentionally excluding them. The best way to find out is obviously by talking to under-represented people to find out what (if anything) they want from an allotment site. Your CVS or lotteries office may be able to put you in touch with relevant groups.

Providing facilities for people who do not currently use the site only has a purpose if you are certain that the facilities are actually what they want. Do not steam

Dale Allotment Association, Nottingham

Created mini allotment plots to attract families and provided child-friendly raised beds, a children's play area, communal BBQ and composting toilet.

Bootstrap Enterprises , Blackburn

Produced a 'New Growers Pack' and a plot clearance service to attract people new to gardening.

Environ Trust "Seeds of Change" project, Leicester

Have appointed an officer experienced in producing promotional materials specific to black and minority ethnicities and are working with the appropriate networks, centres and faith groups to increase uptake of allotments by families.

ahead with raised beds and wheelchair paths unless you know that wheelchair users in your local community want to use the site, for example.

Type of organisation

Constituted associations are able to apply for most public grants, whilst some charitable trusts require applicants to be a registered charity. Becoming a registered charity is a lengthy process and allotments are not recognised as charitable unless they have an additional activity, e.g. educational work.

It is generally only worth considering the 'charitable route' if your organisation has grown too big to continue as a constituted association and you require the wider benefits of having charitable status.

Constitution and lease

You may need to provide copies of your association's constitution (or rules) and site lease (if you have one) with your grant application. With many of the bigger grant schemes the wording of these documents has a significant impact on the application. You can sometimes obtain feedback on these documents before making your application.

Lease

If allotments are on public land this can exclude them from some of the larger grant schemes. Others may want to see evidence of a long lease, as that makes their investment more secure – so self-managed sites with a 20 year lease have an advantage here.

Working in partnership

By working with other organisations, you may obtain useful information, help with applying for grants and setting up projects, promotion and a higher profile for your project. Possible partners include Groundwork, BTCV, PCTs and sustainability and environmental forums.

A word of warning: do not allow other organisations to take over your project or commit to anything you don't want to. Steer clear of organisations that ask for

priority for their members or groups in using your services. Partnerships can take up more energy and time than they give, so assess what you want to get out of the partnership and monitor outcomes carefully.

Community Development Trusts

The UK's five hundred Community Development Trusts aim to bring about social, economic and environmental renewal through community enterprise (social businesses). A number of trusts are involved in food projects and may be able to provide help with income generation proposals on your allotments.

Ethical funding

Some grant bodies have attracted criticism over the source of their funds, on ethical or environmental grounds. Your association may wish to adopt an ethical funding policy to help deal with this problem. Organisations with ethical funding policies include Oxfam and Friends of the Earth.

Tips on making grant applications

If you have never applied for a grant before, it is easy to be put off trying to work out which grants you can apply for by the paperwork involved. Remember, there is lots of help and advice out there, so don't struggle alone.

Before you start writing any grant application make sure you:

- Reach agreement about what your group wants to do and how you are going to do it.
- Research potential funders thoroughly. What do they require? Is there an application form? Who and what will they fund? When do they accept applications? Is there a deadline?
- Ensure each funding application is tailored to the individual funder – don't just send the same thing to everyone.

Then, submit your application in accordance with the specific requirements of the Trust/Company being approached, e.g. application form, time of submission,

additional materials. If the funder does not provide a specific application form send a short personal letter, no more than one page, including an invitation to visit or meet, and a page summary of what you want funding for.

Follow up your application with a short phone call or note after any deadline has passed; unless the funder specifically requests no contact.

Preparing your application

All applications should include the **"Five Ws"**:

- 1 **Who?** Describe your group.
- 2 **What?** Detail exactly what you want to spend the money on.
- 3 **When** do you need it? Allow several months for processing your application.
- 4 **Where?** Describe your local community.
- 5 **Why?** Explain who will benefit as a result of receiving the grant.

They should also include the **"Big three Hs"**:

- 1 **How** you are going to achieve what you want to do.
- 2 **How** much it will cost in total.
- 3 **How** much funding you are requesting.

Other points to remember:

- Enclose some relevant support material (not too much) including, where possible, good visuals, e.g. photos or drawings, a detailed budget for the project (see below) and your last annual report and accounts.
- Always retain a copy of your letters/application forms in case the funder requests further information or clarification, and to enable another member of the association to answer queries if the original writer(s) are unavailable.
- Be prepared for rejection; an application may be turned down for a variety of reasons. It may be too weak, or miss the funder's specific priorities, or there may simply be no money left in that financial year or round of applications. Try to find out why it was rejected and

consider applying for a different project after a year has lapsed.

- In addition to sending a thank you letter, keep funders informed as the project progresses; this will help to strengthen and further develop your relationship with them to potentially secure more funds. Send progress reports and other communications, if appropriate, e.g. annual report, invitations to events, photographs, childrens' work, publicity material and press releases that mention the funder. Two or three contacts per year is enough; too often and the funder may feel bombarded by the amount of paper they have to read.
- Be honest - spend money as agreed and consult the funder if it is necessary to make significant changes to the project they have funded, it can happen! Sometimes you may receive money from two sources, each for the same work. Get back in touch with one of the funders, explain and ask if you can spend the money on another specific piece of work; they are unlikely to say no.

Budgets

When making an application for funding you will need to inspire confidence in your ability to handle money. You will need to work out what everything is going to cost before you fill out the grant application.

Make sure you:

- Obtain three quotes for any capital items or contractual costs and select the one that shows best value for money (not necessarily the cheapest).
- Factor in the cost of obtaining any 'permissions': e.g. planning permission for a wooden compost toilet will cost about £300.
- Factor in any consultancy costs, e.g. walls above 6 foot and many structures will require input from an engineer, you may need a solicitor, help applying for planning permission etc. Check whether you can access these free from Business in the Community (see *Income Generation* factsheet).

Matched funding

You will probably need to show evidence of matched funding, in other words, funding additional to the grant that you are applying for. The matched funding could be:

- another grant (a secured grant or one that you are applying for)
- money you have made by fundraising

or

- 'in kind' contributions, i.e. anything that has been given to the project: free materials; expert advice; voluntary help; loan of machinery. Try to work out a theoretical cash figure for these donations, e.g. state what the materials would have cost if you had had to buy them, what it would have cost to hire the workers or consultants (the hourly rate x no. of hours).

Expenditure

You need to be clear about the different types so that you categorise your expenditure correctly and check that it fits the funding criteria.

- **Capital expenditure** is for items that hold their value as assets and could be sold in the future. This includes land, buildings, renovation, vehicles, computers, photocopier, tools, equipment and furniture.
- **Revenue expenditure** is for ongoing spending. This includes salaries, bills for services such as telephone, gas, electricity, rent, stationery and other consumables.
- **Project expenditure** covers all the costs directly associated with the project for which you require funding, e.g. planning permission, consultancy costs.