



2025/27

COMMUNITIES MENTAL HEALTH  
AND WELLBEING FUND FOR ADULTS

# General Information



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot



**VASLAN**  
SOUTH LANARKSHIRE  
Third Sector Interface

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# INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The **Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund (CMHWF)** for Adults was established in October 2021 and to date, it has distributed around **£66 million** to community initiatives supporting mental health and wellbeing across Scotland.

Funding for a fifth and sixth year was announced in March 2025 and a **further £15 million per year will be available.**

The Fund has a strong focus on **prevention and early intervention** - it aims to support grassroots 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 5 & 6 on responding to the ongoing cost of living crisis and supporting those facing socio-economic disadvantage - with a particular focus on supporting the six priority groups identified in the **child poverty delivery plan.**





# SUCCESS CRITERIA

## Eligibility

Read this guidance along with supporting documents to ensure your application is eligible before you submit it. In particular, check that:

- your project meets the criteria and is aimed at adults over 16
- you have answered all relevant questions and used the correct application link
- linked your application to at least one of the priorities of the Fund

The focus of the Fund is on **prevention and early intervention**, and we would expect all funded projects to focus on one or both of these themes.

The focus of the Fund is also on **supporting the adult population**, which is considered to be members of the population adults (aged 16 and over.)

## Impact on mental wellbeing

Your application should make clear how your project will improve mental wellbeing for the participants of the project.

## Inclusivity and accessibility

Be clear about how this project is targeted towards people who would benefit from it the most. Tell us about the practical steps you are taking to ensure your project is inclusive. Think about what inclusiveness and accessibility really mean, have you taken the appropriate steps to ensure your project meets all 3?

## Community focus

Show us how your project is embedded in your community. Be clear about the research you have carried out to determine the need for your project, be clear about how volunteers are or will be involved in your project. Tell us who you are working in partnership with, how you intend to monitor and report on your project?

## Collaboration

Have you looked at other small organisations in your area and considered if there could be a partnership or collaborative work?

# SUCCESS CRITERIA

## **Who can the Fund support**

The Fund should be inclusive of the following priority 'at risk' groups:

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 neuro-diverse communities; and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) communities, and young people aged 16-24.



# FUND AIMS AND PRIORITIES

The overarching aim of the Fund is to **support community-based initiatives that promote and develop good mental health and wellbeing**. It also aims to **protect against the impact of distress and mental ill health within the adult population**.

The Fund aims to:



**Tackle Mental Health Inequalities.**



**Address priority issues of social isolation and loneliness, suicide prevention, and poverty and inequality.**



**Support small 'grassroots' community groups and organisations to deliver such activities.**



**Provide opportunities for people to connect with each other, build trusted relationships and revitalise communities.**

The priorities of the Fund which link directly to these aims are:

**1**

**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.**

**2**

**Foster a strategic and preventative approach to improving community mental health.**

**3**

**Support the resilience of communities and investing in their capacity to develop their own solutions, including through strong local partnerships.**

**4**

**Tackle the social determinants of mental health by targeting resources and collaborating with other initiatives to tackle poverty and inequality.**

All projects must have a specific community focus within South Lanarkshire **ONLY**.



# EXISTING PROJECTS AND CONTINUATION

Groups can apply to the Fund for existing projects funded by the Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund for Adults.

Panels may ask if there is any additionality to previously funded projects however this is not a requirement. We will be looking for real life impact over additionality.

The Fund must not be seen as a way to replace other funding streams. Granting funds to projects that are previously funded through statutory bodies is at the discretion of Third Sector Interfaces (TSI's).

However, projects must demonstrate value added to statutory provision. This will allow projects that meet the Fund's objectives to be considered, but only granted funding if they can demonstrate clear additionality. For instance, a project that adds value by addressing unmet needs beyond statutory provision.



# WHO CAN APPLY?

The ambition of the Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund for Adults is to support initiatives that promote mental health and wellbeing at a small-scale, grassroots, community level.

It is accessible to all grassroot organisations and groups within South Lanarkshire.

Funded organisations do not need to have to have mental health and wellbeing as their sole focus, but, as this is the purpose of this Fund, their application does have to clearly outline how it benefits the mental health and wellbeing of people in their community. Due to the anticipated over subscription of the fund your application **MUST** have a clear link to the priorities of this fund.

**National organisations undertaking initiatives in South Lanarkshire area are not excluded but are not the main focus of the Fund and will only be funded by exception, this exception will be where needs cannot be met by grassroot organisations.**

Applications will only be accepted from voluntary, 'not for profit' organisations, associations, groups and clubs or consortiums/partnerships which have a strong community focus for their activities.

## **The range of organisations eligible to apply are:**

- Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisations (SCIO)
- Unincorporated Associations
- Companies Limited by Guarantee
- Trusts
- Not-for-profit company, asset locked company or Community Interest Companies (CIC)
- Cooperative and Community Benefit Societies
- Community councils
- Parent councils



Please note that parent councils are eligible to apply, subject to the following conditions:

- The funded activities must meet the aims of the Fund and specifically must focus on supporting young people aged 16 or over - supporting adults rather than their children.

- Any parent council applying to this Fund must have a statutory duty to keep proper accounts, for which there may already be legal and regulatory requirements for them to do so depending on the status of the parent council. For example, some parent councils are registered with OSCR as a charity.

- The funded activities must meet the aims of the Fund and specifically must focus on supporting adults rather than their children.

## Un-constituted groups

Un-constituted groups will not be eligible to apply for multi-year funding. This does not exclude them from being funded in Year 5 and again in Year 6 for 1-year grants.

If you don't have a written governing document, you can apply for grant funding up to a maximum of £2,000 but only where you are working in partnership with either a community council or an established, incorporated, or constituted organisation that is willing to hold the funding on your behalf.

If you select this category, we will ask for further information and written evidence to show an agreement in place between organisations.

Examples of potential organisations who may agree to hold funds on an un-constituted group's behalf:

- Community councils
- Church's (Please note, projects can't be faith-based)
- Well established constituted organisations

Some types of projects which may benefit from the fund include (but are not limited to):

- Arts and creative projects
- Physical and recreation activities
- Befriending or peer support groups
- Lunch, food or cookery clubs
- Gardening and green space initiatives
- Mindfulness sessions (Non Clinical)
- Work to support people in distress



Examples of groups which were successful in applying to previous years of the Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund can be found on our website.



# What size of grant can be awarded?

The ambition of the South Lanarkshire Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund for Adults is to support initiatives which promote mental health and wellbeing at a small, grass roots, community level. It should be accessible to all groups, no matter how small or inexperienced they are.

Levels of funding for groups applying for **one year ONLY**:

**Micro Grants** - up to £2,000 (aimed at un-constituted organisations)

**Small Grants** - between £0 - £10,000

Levels of funding for groups applying for **multi-year funding**:

**Main Grants** - between £10,000 - £20,000 per year

**Partnership Grants** - up to £35,000 per year

Please note that Voluntary Action South Lanarkshire (VASlan) cannot hold funds for any organisation.





### **What can be funded:**

- Equipment, materials & capital costs
- One-off events
- Hall and room hire (including appropriate refreshments)
- Participation costs
- Staffing costs
- Training costs
- Transport
- Utilities and running costs
- Volunteer expenses
- Safety equipment and PPE

### **The Fund will NOT support applications for:**



- Clinical mental health treatment such as therapy or counselling
- Contingency costs, loans, endowments or interest
- Political or religious campaigning
- Profit-making or fundraising activities
- VAT that you can reclaim
- Statutory activities
- Overseas travel
- Alcohol and other harmful substances (e.g. tobacco)

## Fair Work First requirements

Fair Work First is the Scottish Government's flagship policy for driving high quality and fair work and workforce diversity across the labour market in Scotland.

Scottish Government [Fair Work First Guidance](#), updated on 18 November 2024, explains the Fair Work First approach, provides good practice examples to guide employers' approaches and, importantly, explains the benefits of fair work for workers and organisations. It is designed to encourage and support employers to adopt fair work practices within their organisation, focusing on the Fair Work First criteria.

Through Fair Work First the Scottish Government is asking employers in receipt of public sector grant funding to adopt the following criteria:

### **Mandatory:**

- payment of at least the real Living Wage
- provide appropriate channels for effective workers' voice, such as trade union recognition

### **Desirable:**

- investment in workforce development
- no inappropriate use of zero hours contracts;
- address workplace inequalities, including pay and employment gaps for disabled people, racialised minorities, women and workers aged over 50
- offer flexible and family friendly working practices for all workers from day one of employment
- oppose the use of fire and rehire practice

The mandatory criteria are the minimum standard required for a grant award, and grant applicants should also confirm that they are committed to working towards the five remaining desirable criteria.

## Fair Work First requirements

With regards to the real Living Wage, the guidance notes that - The real Living Wage condition requires that the following groups of workers who are 16 and over, including apprentices, are paid at least the real Living Wage:

- All staff who are directly employed by the grant recipient and work in Scotland.
- All staff who are directly employed by the grant recipient and directly engaged in delivering the funded activity but based elsewhere in the UK.
- All workers (in a third party organisation) not directly employed by the grant recipient who are directly engaged in delivering the funded activity and based anywhere in the UK.

The Fair Work First Guidance states that where the cumulative value of grant funding received by an organisation from an individual funder over a single financial year is below £100,000, self-declaration is sufficient.

It should be noted that fair work guidance around effective workers' voice does not apply to the funded projects.





# COMPLIANCE

## Due Diligence

For multi-year grants, VASLan requires assurance that your organisation remains sustainable for the full two-year funding period. VASLan will conduct interim checks during the first year of the project and will request a financial forecast before releasing the second year's funds. The organisation will be responsible for advising VASLan of any financial or sustainability issues that would prevent it from continuing into the second year of funding.

## Branding

The Fund should be referred to as the Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund for Adults. Please ensure the Scottish Government logo is included alongside any of your own logos on any online materials linked to the fund (i.e. name of TSI etc).

You can find further guidance by [clicking here](#). Right click on the image and choose "Save as..." to download the file.



## Subsidy Control

The new UK Subsidy Controls have replaced EU State Aid in the UK, following Brexit. The controls outline how the government can provide financial support to UK businesses and sets limits on this.

The Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund grants are paid under the UK Subsidy Controls, using the new SAFA (Small Amounts of Financial Assistance) rules as set out at Article 3.2.4 of the EU/UK Trade & Cooperation Agreement.

This currently allows organisations to receive up to £325,000 of government subsidy in any three financial years, but we are asking organisations to tell us about anything over £315k, as the rules are likely to change in the next few months.

# What counts towards the SAFA limit?

Your organisation may have received support from public authorities (the government, local authorities, health authorities, some Lottery funds, HMRC etc) in the last three financial years. This support may have been in the form of grants, loans, tax incentives or business advice. However, not all of this support will “count” towards the SAFA limit.

## Counts towards limit

- Employment Allowance (HMRC support for National Insurance payments, which is currently up to £4000 a year)
- Some COVID grants or loans
- It should state if these are paid under SAFA or State Aid de minimis rules on the paperwork
- Any other grants or support you have received under State Aid De Minimis or SAFA Rules in last three financial years.

## Does not count towards limit

- Job Retention Scheme (Furlough) grants
- Grants or loans paid under EU Temporary Framework (some business grants, some SESF grants)
- Grants from non public authorities – such as Trusts and Foundations
- Other: Trading income, including contracts from public bodies, donations from individuals or corporates

Normally, if the grant or support you received was provided as State Aid de minimis funding or under SAFA rules, you should have a letter or agreement which states this.

## How much is allowed under SAFA Rules?

Your organisation is allowed to receive £325k (soon to be £315k) of government subsidy under SAFA or State Aid de minimis rules in any three financial years. You should therefore consider any government subsidy in this financial year and your last two financial years.

## What am I agreeing to, when I sign my grant offer?

When you sign your Communities Mental Health & Wellbeing grant offer, you are confirming that, including this grant, you will not have received more than £315k in government subsidies under SAFA or de minimis State Aid in the last three years (this financial year and the last two financial years).

You are also agreeing to the grant conditions, which require you to pay the grant back with interest, if it is later found that you have breached these rules.

# HOW TO APPLY?

## **Applications for one year funding ONLY**

This section is NOT for multi-year funding. Levels of funding for organisations applying for one year ONLY:

- Micro grants - up to £2,000 (aimed at un-constituted organisations)
- Small grants - between £0 - £10,000

Applications for one year funding have 18-months to carry out the intended project.

You can apply for one year of money by accessing the VASLan website at [www.vaslan.org.uk/cmhwf](http://www.vaslan.org.uk/cmhwf). Please ensure you are using the right form.

VASLan will require you to submit the organisations governing document and the last financial years accounts for your organisation. If you do not have these please contact VASLan for support.

## **Applications for multi-year funding**

If you are applying for two years of funding, please use the correct application form. This can be accessed via the VASLan website: [www.vaslan.org.uk/cmhwf](http://www.vaslan.org.uk/cmhwf)

Levels of funding for organisations applying to multi-year funding (2 years):

- Main grants - between £10,000 - £20,000 per year
- Partnership grants - up to £35,000 per year

You will need to send VASLan the following documents:

- Last financial years accounts
- Governing document
- Financial forecast for 2 years of the project (showing sustainability of the organisation)
- Project delivery plan
- Risk register
- Written partnership agreement (if applicable). VASLan will provide this.

**Failure to submit this information will result In VASLan withdrawing your application from the panel process.**



## **What happens after you apply?**

Your application will be reviewed by a VASLan staff member, then categorised as either as ready for presentation or not suitable for fund. VASLan will contact you where it is deemed that your application is not suitable.

There will be one internal panel for one-year applications and one external panel for multi-year applications. During panel, all applications presented will be discussed and scored. This is a meticulous process that ensures all deserving applications receive fair consideration for awards.

Successful applications will be paid in accordance with the condition of grants:

- one year funding applications will receive one lump sum payment
- multi-year funding (2 years) will receive funding amounts quarterly

## **Important information**

Due to limited monies - not all suitable applications can be funded. Discussions at panel will evaluate the need for the proposed project, potential of duplication within the area, sufficient detail within applications & costings etc.

VASLan will not have the capacity to return to organisations for further information so please ensure that your application is complete and includes all relevant information. If you struggle to complete the application, please ask for help from our Development Officers. You can do this by calling the office on 01698 300390.

## **Feedback for rejected applications / Abuse of VASLan staff**

VASLan will always aim to support organisations and will strive to offer feedback where it is possible. Please allow up to 4 weeks after requesting feedback as this will be a very busy period for staff.

We are aware that in Year 4 some unsuccessful organisations have been demonstrating their frustration in a range of ways, including subjecting VASLan staff members to inappropriate and abusive comments. Whilst it is understandable that projects not being funded will be a disappointment, especially in the light of wider financial constraints, we recognise the impact this can have on staff. As such, VASLan will consider revoking membership and the ability to apply for future funding if such communications are received. This step is supported by Scottish Government.

# END OF YEAR REPORTING

As well as an interim check-in, VASLan will request that the questions below are recorded throughout the duration of your project. We will also ask for case studies, photos (if you have any) and possibly the opportunity to interview some of your participants to create an impact report for the Fund.

Below is the reporting that Scottish Government require at the end of your project.

## Evaluating Impact - Questions to ask projects

### **What we did:**

Please outline activities undertaken, including the following details:

- How many activities were undertaken?
- How many participants benefitted?
- Where possible, please include an estimate of the total number of people who benefitted (not counting repeat attendances)

**Please let us know of any achievements to date that you are particularly proud of, or that demonstrate the difference made to individuals mental health and wellbeing (max 500 words).**

### **Please tell us how you achieved each of your proposed outcomes:**

The outcomes your project should have delivered against were in your funding agreement and you **MUST** use these outcomes as described.

- The outcome;
- What methods were used to gather evidence;
- Did you achieve the outcome? What are the indicators that demonstrate success?;

### **Challenges/changes made (max 350 words):**

Any problems you encountered that slowed progress, stopped the outcomes happening or things that were changed.

# END OF YEAR REPORTING

Scottish Government are requesting that organisation engage participants with reporting by having the following survey completed. VASLan will issue this as an online document as well as having word copies available.

## Evaluating Impact - Survey for participants

**Please tell us the name of the group or service you have attended.**

**Please tell us where you accessed this group or service (council area).**

**How did you find out about this group or service?**

- Online
- Word of mouth
- Referral (from a GP, Community Link worker, other professional)
- Other (please specify)

**How long have you been accessing this group or service?**

- 0 - 3 months
- 3 - 6 months
- 6 months +

**We would like to understand whether involvement with this group or service has helped your mental health and wellbeing. Based on your participation so far, to what extent to do you agree with the following statements? (rate from strongly agree - strongly disagree).**

- Participation in this group or service has helped me feel happier and more content
- Participation in this group or service has helped me connect with others
- Participation in this group or service has helped me to feel a sense of belonging in my community
- Participation in this group or service has helped me cope better with difficult situations in my life
- Participation in this group or service has helped improve my confidence and self-esteem

**Is there anything else you would like to tell us?**



# USEFUL LINKS AND CONTACT INFORMATION



**VASLan office phone number: 01698 300390**



**VASLan email address: [funding@vaslan.co.uk](mailto:funding@vaslan.co.uk)**



**VASLan website: [www.vaslan.org.uk](http://www.vaslan.org.uk) or  
[www.vaslan.org.uk/cmhwf](http://www.vaslan.org.uk/cmhwf)**



**[Living Wage Scotland](#) | [The Real Living Wage](#)**



**[Mental health transition and recovery plan: CRWIA Stage 1](#) | [Scottish Government](#)**



**[National Performance Framework](#) | [Scottish Government](#)**