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Darlington Borough Council has launched a special fund in partnership with County Durham Community Foundation to help local voluntary and community organisations that provide support to vulnerable people across the borough.

The key aims of the fund are:

- To help organisations that are providing support and services to the most vulnerable in Darlington during the COVID-19 crisis
- To help organisations that provide support to the most vulnerable all year round but due to the COVID-19 crisis are financially challenged and may not survive, to provide support and services after the end of the crisis

If an organisation has contracted services with Darlington Borough Council and is seeking support, hardship should be addressed through commissioning procedures initially. Organisations that are seeking financial support through this grant programme for activities that are aligned but differ from their contracted services will be considered but will not be given priority.

If an organisation has already received help from the Government's small business relief scheme this will be taken into consideration when assessing and determining any award.

The fund will support the following themes:

Theme 1: Proactive

- Organisations that are supporting older people and other vulnerable groups affected by the COVID-19 outbreak
- Additional costs of working remotely and adapting services being delivered in the wider community including volunteer costs
- Activities to support community coordinated resources
- Initiatives working to combat poverty (e.g. initiatives to tackle food poverty or 'holiday' hunger etc.)
- Advisory services that complement those being put in place by statutory authorities such as directing people to local services or listening on the phone and giving emotional support.

Your project may be new or something you currently deliver but it must respond to the COVID-19 crisis.

Your activity must also complement the support measures that are being put in place in your communities by the statutory authorities e.g. local authority led community hubs.

Theme 2: Recovery and Resilience

- Measures that mean that the organisation is able to provide services as the crisis evolves and communities learn to adapt to new ways of working whilst the pandemic risk remains
- A contribution to charities and community organisations whose operations and finances are significantly affected by loss of income due to restrictions in place around COVID-19

Additional Points before you start your application

- You can apply for a COVID-19 Fund grant even if you currently hold a grant from the Foundation
- If you have had a Community Grant from the Foundation within the past 3 months and have had to cease activities, are you able to repurpose that funding? Please get in touch if you would like to repurpose your monies at info@cdcf.org.uk, referencing your live grant number.
- How are you planning to deploy your reserves at this time? Grants will not be awarded where there is evidence that an organisation has its own funds that could be utilised to fully cover the requirements in the grant application
- If you have adequate reserves, we will expect you to use these to support your organisation in the short term. We will, however, consider part-funding COVID-19 proposals that are a variation of your usual services where you are committing some reserves
- Consider are there Government or other Darlington Borough Council schemes that you can access to support your organisation, for example has your organisation applied, or are considering applying, to furlough PAYE staff under the Coronavirus job retention scheme? Applying for business support funding?
- Have you checked to make sure that your project activity is complementing other schemes in your area?
- As part of your application we will be asking how many Darlington residents your activity supports, the nature of that support and how your activity supports the most vulnerable. As funding is limited this information will form a critical part of the grant assessment process.

Size of grants

Grants are available of up to £10,000 although it is envisaged that the majority of grant awards will be c£5,000.

What can be funded

This fund aims to be flexible, however, we would not expect the grant to cover major capital works or repairs. You are not expected to provide quotations for any small pieces of equipment that you need. You are not expected to provide detailed costed budgets for expected spend, however, we will expect appropriate estimates that can be verified on final monitoring.

Who can apply?

Groups must:

- Be delivering services in Darlington for the people of the Borough of Darlington , and be based in Darlington. Consideration will be given to groups delivering services in Darlington but based just outside the Borough however these applications will not be given priority.
- Have a management committee with at least 3 unrelated members
- Be a voluntary organisation, community group, small charity or other not for profit organisation
- Have a bank account in the group's name (with two unrelated signatories)

If you wish to apply to this fund on behalf of your organisation but your organisation does not meet the requirements above in the first instance, please contact us at info@cdcf.org.uk.

If you have received funding from County Durham Community Foundation in the past 12 months, you **will not** need to provide supporting documentation. You should however provide us with an update of your finances and governance on assessment (which is likely to be in a phone call with the main contact named in your application).

If you are new to the Foundation or have not held a grant from us within the past 12 months, your applications will only be considered complete when all supporting documentation has been received. This includes:

- Constitution (registered charities need not provide this)
- Recent accounts or balance sheet
- Safeguarding document (if appropriate)
- Copy of recent bank statement clearly showing name of group, sort code and account number

Applying to the Fund

It is likely that we will want to speak to you about your application. On the application form you will be asked for the main contact details for your organisation AND for a secondary set of contact details (if the main contact is not able to respond to queries). You must have the permission of the secondary contact to provide their details.

Your application will be assessed and reviewed by a decision panel, where a decision will be made on whether to fund the application at this time.

You will be notified shortly after the panel; our aim is to get a decision to you within 2 weeks of receiving your completed application and having had a short phone call with your group's main contact (if needed).

Grant monies will be paid at the start of the grant once signed terms and conditions have been received. Terms and conditions are to be sent electronically to us not by post.

If you require any further information, please email info@cdcf.org.uk. To help us deal with your query swiftly please include **Darlington COVID19 Fund** in your email title.