



Principles of our grant-making

The Foundation (Charity Number 1047625) began in 1995 as an independent grant-making charity. We promote lasting charitable giving by bringing together donors with their chosen causes through well-targeted grants that make a genuine difference in the lives of local people.

We manage various funds for individuals, families, organisations, statutory bodies, trusts and companies, distributing monies on their behalf and in line with our charitable aims.

We take a strategic approach to grant-making, ensuring sustainable change in our communities and in the organisations we fund. We aim to be fair, professional, effective, and proactive through our grants.

We manage our funds in a variety of ways:

- Some funds are set up to allow our donors to support organisations with specific charitable purposes or give to a particular geographical area or field of interest,
- Other donors prefer to align their funds with the Foundation's strategic aims in tackling poverty and enriching lives, as outlined in our Plan and Values,
- All the grants must demonstrate they have a charitable purpose and align with the Foundation's charitable aims and objectives.

Our grant-making policy

The Foundation has signed a pledge to open and trusting grant-making, a campaign coordinated by the [Institute for Voluntary Action Research \(IVAR\)](#).

The Foundation will only award grants to registered charities, social enterprises or organisations with charitable purposes that have:

- A management committee/governance body with at least four independent and unrelated members,
- A bank or building society account in the name of the group, with a minimum of two unrelated cheque signatories,
- Appropriate governing documents, i.e. a constitution, Memorandum and Articles of Association, etc.

To support applicants through the process, we provide:

- An [online eligibility checker](#),
- A [frequently asked questions page](#),
- A [funding helpline](#) to guide groups through the application process.



Our funding programmes are wide-ranging and come from various sources or donors. We encourage organisations applying for funding to check that they are eligible. We ask all organisations to read each fund's relevant programme guidelines before applying.

Applying for a grant

A complete list of funds and programmes is available on the Foundation website. The ['Apply for a grant'](#) section lists those open for applications. Guidelines for all programmes and funds are also available for download.

How do we make decisions about grants?

We complete due diligence and finance checks on each application, and we ensure the organisation and project meet the programme criteria. During the assessment, we will look for:

- Project and organisational management,
- Evidence of need,
- Achievable goals,
- Value for money,
- An appropriate budget,
- Financial probity.

The key principles of GDPR cover all information an applicant provides.

We take great care to assess all applications against published criteria consistently and equitably, in line with our values, grant-making policy and fund requirements.

Unsuccessful applications

The Foundation will explain in writing why an application has been unsuccessful.

Applicants who feel their treatment has been unfair can appeal in writing to the Foundation, and we will consider the request. Applicants must include evidence to support their appeal. Applicants cannot appeal because they disagree with the Foundation's decision.

Please see our Appeals Policy available on our website.



Grant Offer

In every grant offer's Terms and Conditions (T&Cs), we will briefly explain why the application was successful.

Before we make any payment, applicants must:

- Complete the standard T&Cs,
- Accept the offer,
- Agree to any special conditions applied,
- Agree to the reporting and monitoring requirements of the grant.

We will be very clear upfront about any non-negotiable reporting requirements that are a condition of the grant. We will try not to change those requirements.

You must talk to us as soon as possible if any change to the project or organisation will affect how you spend the grant or deliver the project. Together, we always try to find a solution to situations like this.

We will be clear about the type of relationship we would like to have with the organisations we fund. We'll agree:

- The type of contact: for example, reporting, emails, phone calls or meetings) the depth of those contacts.
- The frequency of contact: for example, weekly, monthly, quarterly.
- The depth of contact: what our expectations will be of those meetings.

Breaches

If the Foundation believes an applicant has breached the T&Cs, we have the right to request the return of the total grant awarded.

We won't accept future applications from organisations/individuals in breach for at least two years. After two years, we will only accept applications if we see evidence of action taken to strengthen management capacity, including support sought from appropriate organisations.

Monitoring

Monitoring is a requirement and condition of any grant made. We will always outline these requirements in the grant offer letter.

Monitoring and reporting is essential for our work. It helps us to understand community need; it enables us to learn from our grant-making and inform future strategies; it also allows us to show donors the impact of their funding and hopefully encourage further donations.



We will only ask for the information we need and use. We may occasionally require bespoke reporting, which will form part of the T&Cs agreement before funds are released.

We will give feedback on the grant reporting we receive. We like to validate good work, celebrate success, and work with you to review any areas where things may not have gone according to plan.

We will consider the following to be a breach of the T&Cs:

- If you don't submit satisfactory monitoring information at all,
- If you miss the deadline to submit adequate monitoring information.

We won't accept future applications from organisations/individuals in breach for at least two years. So, please talk to us as soon as you realise there may be a problem or a delay with submitting your monitoring information so we can solve the problem together.

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

The Foundation requires all grant recipients working with children, young people or vulnerable adults to have policies and safeguards to protect these client groups in line with current legislation. We will request copies of these policies for our grants assessment process.

Mitigating the Risk of Fraud

The Foundation takes fraud very seriously. At every opportunity, we will carry out a range of checks during the assessment process to mitigate the risk of fraud.

We know that fraud could occur in all stages of the grant-making process. We pay particular attention to the following as areas of potential risk:

- A newly set up group,
- Too few management committee members,
- Discrepancies between financial information provided on the application form and in the audited accounts or on the charity regulator's website,
- A registered charity that does not comply with the statutory duty to submit accounts and annual returns to the charity regulator within 10 months of the end of the financial year,
- Discrepancies between the named applicant organisation and the name as it appears in the constitution/bank account,
- Having only one cheque signatory or having cheque signatories related to each other,
- Relationships between trustees/committee members/cheque signatories,
- Organisations with one or more trading names.



The list above is not exhaustive; we might conduct a more rigorous investigation of a particular applicant if we think it's necessary.

If we discover fraudulent use of grant monies, we will:

- Attempt to recover the grant in full grant, along with any associated costs,
- Inform the relevant regulatory authorities, including the police,
- Consider legal action.

Future Review

This policy is a working document used to guide and clarify the grant-making activity of the Foundation.

The policy has been developed over time and reflects:

- the needs and requirements of the voluntary and community sector,
- the needs and expectations of our donors,
- Our values and grant-making approach,
- Current regulations and legislation.

The policy will be reviewed every three years by the grants team, relevant sub-committee, and the Board of Trustees.

We will agree on any intermediate changes to the policy with the relevant sub-committee.

Further Information

Please get in touch with the Foundation for more information about this policy.

County Durham Community Foundation
Victoria House, Whitfield Court, St Johns Road, Meadowfield Industrial Estate, Durham, DH7 8XL

Tel: 0191 378 6340

Email: info@cdcf.org.uk

Web: www.cdcf.org.uk