

Hertfordshire Families First

External Funding Guide

March 2024



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1.0 Introduction

This guide has been developed to help organisations as part of the Families First partnership access funding that can help you achieve your aims. The guide is organised into a number of sections. Section 3.0 includes background information on the guide, on external funding and hints for your grant applications.

1.1 Background

The Families First Partnership is comprised of a range of public, private, community and voluntary organisations. This guide is aimed at outlining how best to apply for new funding to support the work that you do in Hertfordshire. The overall aim of the guide is to increase the amount of funding secured by organisations that work in the county to deliver your services.

1.2 Who can apply for funding?

- Community or voluntary organisation, a constituted group or club
- Registered charity
- Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)
- Not-for-profit company
- Community Interest Company (CIC)
- School (where the project benefits and involves the surrounding community)
- Statutory body (including local authorities, town, parish, and community council)

1.3 Why apply for external funding?

If you feel that your organisation is achieving everything that you wish it to do and is completely meeting the needs of all the people it is set up to help, then you have no need to apply for external funding. However external funding can be crucial in helping you to:

- Expand to reach new areas or groups.
- Offer new services.
- Start a new project.
- Develop your organisation's capacity so that it can achieve even more in the future.
- Try a new and imaginative approach to tackling the issues you are interested in.
- Carry on with your current level of services as other forms of funding decrease.
- Employ paid members of staff to help your organisation grow.
- Build or renovate premises or buy equipment.

Not all grants will be available for all of these areas, so you will need to check carefully the rules of the organisations you apply to. External funding can help organisations of all sizes, from new projects starting up, to established groups with no paid staff looking to expand, to large national and international charities. There will be funds that are appropriate to each.

1.4 Sources of external funding

Funding may be offered by central or local government (or even by the EU), by The National Lottery, or from grant making trusts. Grant making trusts account for about 10% of the total funding of the voluntary and community sector. They are diverse in terms of scale, size of grant, areas they support, and nature of the application process. They can often take risks that statutory (government) funders cannot. Funding may also be available from private organisations as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility programmes.

- European Union
- National
- Regional/Local
- The National Lottery
- Charitable Trusts and Foundations
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

UK Funding – local and regional

- **Regional** – Each region has their own programmes and funding pots available. Projects are delivered in that area e.g. running an environmental campaign in a specific geographic location.
- **Local** – Though available less than in the past, local authorities sometimes run their own small funding programmes to support local community and voluntary organisations.
- **Local commissioning/Procurement** – To deliver services on behalf of another organisation e.g. providing out of school provision for children with SEND on behalf of the local authority.

Corporate Sponsorship Responsibility

By practicing corporate social responsibility, companies can be socially accountable and conscious of the impact they are having on all aspects of society, including economic, social, and environmental. To engage in CSR means that, in the ordinary course of business, a company is operating in ways that enhance society and the environment, instead of having a negative impact. CSR helps both society and the brand image of companies. Below are examples of organisations that have dedicated CSR strategies and some of the issues they support.

- **BT** - Global communications service provider, BT, serves customers in the UK and operates in more than 170 countries worldwide. CSR forms a big part of their corporate governance, and they have been positioned as a sustainable responsible business leader.
- **Starbucks** - the global coffee chain's C.A.F.E. regulations were set up to protect the social and environmental rights of everybody involved in the coffee making process, from

farmer to consumer. Starbucks is also a supporter of Ethos Water, which aims to provide clean water to over a billion people.

- **Google** – reported in 2020 that it has wiped out its entire carbon footprint by investing in ‘high quality carbon offsets’ and working on shipments to and from customers being 100% carbon neutral. They have pledged that 'Made by Google' products launching from 2022 will maximise the amount of recycled content wherever possible.

1.5 Other forms of help available

Some trusts offer support in addition to making grants. This may be by offering advice and training on issues such as governance or other aspects of successfully running a charity or community organisation. This is often referred to as capacity building.

Crowdfunding - Websites such GoFundMe are an opportunity for members of the public to support the work of community groups and not for profit organisations. They can donate funds via the internet. Social media is the method used by the majority of fundraising campaigns seeking crowdfunding, given that it comes with little to no cost to the organization, and yet can deliver effective results. Your organisation may be able to attract funding on particular campaigns if advertised and communicated effectively.

Cash donations - Funding for some charities and voluntary organisations is secured primarily through individual donors. A more structured approach is to set up a membership scheme whereby members can undertake to make a regular donation by standing order. The benefits are a regular income for the organisations, and that members feel part of the organisation. An effective Communications Strategy will ensure that members are aware of the work of the organisation and can help to promote it through sharing social media posts etc.

In-kind donations - Similar to cash donations, some organisations provide in-kind donations such as clothing, food, furniture, transportation etc.

Section 106 – Planning gain - Planning gains (or planning obligations) are ways that local authorities can secure additional public benefits from developers, during the granting of planning permission. They are used to fund the provision of public amenities including affordable housing, community infrastructure (such as libraries or parks), or environmental safeguards.

Sponsorship - Sponsorship is a business relationship between a provider of funds, resources, or services and an individual, event or organisation which offers in return some rights and association that may be used for commercial advantage. Sponsorship can be in the form of staff time, goods or services, or cash.

General Funding/Fundraising Activities - Organisations can raise funds through fundraising in a number of different ways such as:

- Sponsored activities, walks, cake sales etc
- Summer / Christmas Fayres
- Raffles / Quiz Nights / Auctions
- Bring and share events
- Doing nothing e.g. - a sponsored silence, giving up chocolate are just some of the ways you can raise money for your chosen cause.

1.6 How this guide can help you secure external funding

'Successful Grant Applications: Handy Hints' on pages **7-11** provides tips for how to increase the likelihood that your application for funding is successful.

1.7 Engagement and Co-Production

It is vitally important to involve children, young people, parents and carers and to hear their ideas and feedback. Engagement includes all activities that support the genuine involvement of service users in positively shaping what is done and the way services are planned, delivered, and evaluated. Service users should be able to see how their involvement can help to improve their community and services delivered to them. Increasing the participation and engagement of young people has benefits for the young people themselves, for the groups involved, and for the community as a whole:

- **Benefits for young people:** Opportunities to build their skills, increase their self-esteem, and make a difference to services and issues that they consider important.
- **Benefits for the groups involved:** Helps you to target services, provide what young people are looking for, harness new ideas and enthusiasm. Young people are more likely to be satisfied with services if they've had a role in designing them.
- **Benefits for the Community:** Ensures that more and better services are provided, and that there are more links between different groups in the community. Young people are more engaged in their local community and better able to make a positive contribution to it.

Even if your project or community group does not work solely with children and young people, it is worth making an effort to get them involved. Remember:

- In 2022 20% of the Hertfordshire population were aged under 16. If you don't involve children and young people just think how much of the community you'll be missing out on.
- Our children and young people are the future of our area. We can't build better communities for the future if our future adults aren't engaged.

- Children and young people often need to be engaged in slightly different ways from the rest of the community, otherwise it's easy for them to feel that the activity or group is not for them. Considering their needs separately can mean that you benefit from their views and enthusiasm, as well as from that of the rest of the community. Funders want to be sure that the projects they fund are providing the services that communities want and need, and that they are sustainable. Participation and engagement help with this in many ways including:
 - Showing that community views are listened to and acted upon (or even, ideally, are central to the project);
 - Helping communities to help themselves, rather than imposing solutions from outside.

Co-production is an approach where we bring people together to have their say on local services and influence how they may be delivered in the future. This will include people who have used the services (known as 'experts by experience'), carers, voluntary and statutory sector organisations and frontline delivery staff from your organisation.

2.0 Successful Grant Applications: Handy Hints

There are many ways organisations can access external funding. Some organisations will accept direct bids, others won't but there are ways round this. Partnership bids with other organisations (such as charities) can often secure funding for projects where both organisations are looking to deliver similar outcomes. For example, a registered charity could bid for funding and if successful commission your organisation to deliver the project.

2.1 Tips for deciding which organisations to apply to

- **Are we eligible?** - Look very carefully at who and what is funded: If you or your project do not meet their criteria they will not offer you funding, so don't waste your time in applying.
- Look at the **application procedures** - If you will have to spend months jumping through numerous hoops in order for the funding body to reach a decision, then the grant might not actually be worth it, and you might be better off spending your time on applying to other possible sources of funding. Equally, if you will need the money for a project in four months' time, and the decision will only be made in 11 months when the funding board sits again, then it's not the right funder for you.
- Sometimes small funders have over the top **compliance and monitoring rules** – is the funding worth the effort of on-going monitoring?

2.2 Tips for obtaining funding

- **Do your homework beforehand:** Trusts vary greatly in who they will fund, the size of grant they give out, and what they are looking for in an application. Make sure that you read all the guidance information they give out. Look at how they define the problem they are offering funding to tackle, as they may refer to evidence that you can respond to in your application. Check that your organisation fits with what they say they will fund. If it doesn't, there's no point in applying! If there's a telephone number given you might want to call to talk through your proposal with someone before you submit it. As well as preparing a succinct explanation of your main idea, it is worthwhile having a Plan B and being ready to be flexible and take on the funder's feedback from the call.
- **Prepare your application carefully:** Many funding applications are rejected because they haven't given the information that funders need, or because they don't include all the documents that the funders have asked for.
- **Leave plenty of time:** Many trusts only meet 2 or 3 times a year, and your application will have to wait until then. Look carefully at the information in this guide to see how long the application is likely to take. Very few organisations will fund work that has already taken place so you will need to plan your applications for money carefully.
- **Mention funding or help you already receive:** Many trusts like to know that you receive funding or help from other sources. This does not have to be money, although it can help to express it financially. For instance, if you have a number of sports coaches who give their time for free, that's effectively a donation of their wages, or if you get your rent or utilities paid for by another organisation, that's equivalent to being given the money that would cost you to pay for these things yourself.

Develop a fundraising Plan: This is particularly useful when significant funding is required to provide a co-ordinated approach looking at different approaches and funding sources, timeframes, risks and roles and responsibilities. You may wish to prepare the key information and context of your organisation in advance; including facts and figures which are kept up-to-date. It is also worthwhile talking to other organisations who you may be able to collaborate with so that, when an opportunity for funding arises, you are ready to move forward.

2.3 Tips for writing your application

Application processes will generally be competitive with particular submission dates and themes. Sometimes applications can be submitted at any time. Applications are usually assessed and scored against a set decision-making criteria.

Read all instructions given by the funder– and follow them. Incomplete application forms are one of the main reasons that grant applications are refused. Answer each and every question/check all points are covered.

You will need to include:

a) **The purpose of the work** to be funded - who it will help and how, what is distinctive about it, what will be achieved if a grant is given (and what will not be achieved if a grant is not given). Clearly explain the problem you are trying to solve. Use a positive active style and language identifying key points and successes and keeping to the prescribed format. Do not assume the funder knows your organisation or the need you have identified in your local community, so provide as much detail as possible. Keep answers to questions simple.

b) **A budget for the project.** Work out your needs carefully. Don't economise on essentials, such as training or unavoidable overhead costs. Ask for enough money and be clear how you're going to spend it. Ensure that your budget adds up and include any match funding that you will be providing.

In-kind match funding is non-cash support made towards the project. For example, free venue hire, or volunteer support. It does need to be specific to the project. Cash match funding is a monetary sum paid by your organisation or partner agencies put into the project such as wages.

c) **Your name, address, email, website (if you have one) and phone number.**

d) **Anything else that the funder asks you to send.** This will often include your most recent annual report and accounts. If your accounts show apparently large reserves attach a note explaining why you hold them and why they cannot be used to fund the project for which you are seeking funds. If you cannot explain the size of your reserves, consider spending them instead of applying for grants!

Consult with the main stakeholders who the project/funding will benefit so that it is delivering outcomes that are required and needed.

Ask for a specific sum of money. If necessary, say that you are seeking a contribution of £X towards a total budget of £Y, and that you hope to raise the remainder from other sources which you specify. Do not simply say that you are a very worthwhile organisation and desperately need funds.

Don't make your application too long. It should be long enough to describe what you want properly, but short enough to be easy to take in at first reading - usually no more than two pages for your main letter. Many applications have word counts for each section which do need to be adhered to. Don't overload the application with attachments that haven't been asked for. A trust which is seriously interested will ask for anything it hasn't got.

If your organisation does not have charitable status, explain why the work to be funded is charitable.

Stress the added value that your organisation can provide – knowledge, expertise, success stories and access to resources. Outline the organisational capacity to deliver the project and experience, track record and competence in delivering similar projects. Provide case studies to show how you have delivered previously.

Include details of how you will evaluate and measure the success of your project or what the funding will cover. Outline what will happen when the funding finishes and what your exit strategy will be so that the project continues. Trusts are keen to see how projects can be sustained once the funding has come to an end; and how the learning and benefits can be shared with other organisations to benefit more people.

2.4 Things to avoid with your funding application

- Waiting until the last minute to send your application. Technical issues always seem to occur just when you need them least!
- Assuming the funder knows anything about your organisation or your project – include as much detail as possible.
- Asking for more funding than is available.
- Spending funding before you have had official confirmation of the funding.
- Asking the funder for more money if you spend more than you originally thought, unless the funder has stated that this is OK to do so.
- Including too many ‘buzzwords’ in the application and the use of acronyms.
- Rushing the application – take your time, consult with stakeholders, make changes.
- Being vague on details – be clear on geographical areas and age groups.

2.5 If you don't receive funding:

- Ask for feedback. Many small trusts will not have the capacity to provide this, but larger funders should be able to at least give you a few informal tips.
- Don't be disheartened - funders tend to receive far more applications for funding than they have funds available. They may simply have had too little money to fund your project.

2.6 If you receive funding, be sure to:

- Acknowledge the funding, thank the funder, and make arrangements to meet any conditions that may be attached. These are basic steps, but you would be amazed how many organisations do not do this.
- Start planning your data collection and evaluation at the beginning of the project. It is harder to collect helpful data after the project starts.

- Try to keep in touch in any way your funder suggests. If your funder wants frequent reports then provide them, but if your funder only wants annual reports do not flood them with information!
- Let your funder know if there are any problems. They may be able to help with connections to other funders, variations in the funding they offer you, or offer advice and support.
- Let your funder know if you receive any really good news.
- Check, say 6 months before your funding runs out, whether that organisation is prepared to consider a further application! These steps will help you to build an ongoing relationship with your funder and will increase your chances of getting more support in the future.
- Communicate and market the project extensively including the funder's name and level of support.

2.7 What are funders looking for?

- A well-run organisation.
- A well-planned project.
- Delivering real benefits and addressing needs.
- Within the funders area of interest (e.g. mental health support, sport etc).
- A self-aware organisation (knowing limitations, learning etc).
- If this project is successful, how can we sustain it after funding ends?

3.0 Further information and resources

The following web pages are available with a variety of useful information.

Hertfordshire

1) Families First - Grants and funding information

[Grants and Funding \(hertfordshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/grants-and-funding)

2) Herts Sports Partnership

[Get funding in Hertfordshire \(sportinherts.org.uk\)](https://www.sportinherts.org.uk/get-funding-in-hertfordshire)

3) Hertfordshire Community Foundation

[Hertfordshire Community Foundation \(hertscf.org.uk\)](https://www.hertscf.org.uk)

4) Herts Insights

[Welcome to Herts Insight | Herts Insight \(hertfordshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/welcome-to-herts-insight)

General Websites and Information

- www.fundinginformation.org
- www.grantfinder.co.uk
- www.fundersonline.org
- www.dsc.org.uk/fundingwebsites
- www.fundingcentral.org.uk
- www.crowdfunding.co.uk
- www.grantnet.com – offers free advice and guidance, free search facilities.