

COVID-19

Community Support Fund 2020-21

Strand 5

Guidance Notes

The Fund is open from 18th January 2021 and will remain open on a rolling call basis. We expect a high number of applications to the fund and therefore dependent on the availability of funding reserve the right to close the fund at very short notice.

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1.0 Introduction

These guidelines provide information about the financial support available through the COVID-19 Community Support Fund. They will help you and your organisation decide if the financial assistance offered is appropriate to support the project or activities that you are planning.

1.1 Purpose of Grant Programme

Department for Communities has made available funding to local Councils through our existing Community Support Programme to provide additional assistance to vulnerable communities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 Community Support Fund is to provide small grants to local community and voluntary organisations to deal with emerging issues in local communities as a result of the continuing threat of coronavirus.

1.2 Overview of fund

All organisations funded through the COVID-19 Community Support Fund must demonstrate how their project contributes towards addressing the issues in their area. Your project must be in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and must provide community actions in response to the pandemic.

DfC has advised that the funding must support actions in line with the following interventions:

- **Financial** - to those on low income and at risk due to financial stress.
- **Food** - access to food (whether due to cost or availability) for those most in need.
- **Connectivity** - to those living alone or in in rural and border areas that are likely to experience greater challenges in accessing services.'

Please Note:

Council is in receipt of other funding programmes for local community and voluntary groups which are currently open for applications ie Food & Essential Supplies Fund and Warm Well & Connected Fund (for eligible areas of disadvantage).

Organisations intending to apply for food related costs should in the first instance apply to the Food & Essential Supplies Fund (FESF), however if you have already secured and expended a grant through the FESF and you can demonstrate a need for your project, then you can apply for food related costs through the Covid-19 Community Support Fund.

The Warm Well & Connected Fund will support activities that address fuel poverty, tackle loneliness and isolation or promote good mental health and well-being in eligible areas of deprivation. Organisations that have availed of a grant through the WWC Fund can also apply for the Covid-19 CSF as long as it is for a different project or additional evidenced need.

1.3 Priorities of the Fund

Projects must demonstrate how they address the fund priorities:

- Reduce isolation and vulnerability of residents of the Borough, particularly those living alone and those living in rural areas
- Address financial need / poverty as a result of Covid-19
- Support ongoing needs of vulnerable people to make sure their ongoing wellbeing is maintained
- Direct support to those most at risk as a result of the threat of coronavirus
- Ensure vulnerable people remain connected to the outside world

1.4 Levels of grant award.

COVID-19 Community Support Fund	Maximum Grant Amount
Local community/voluntary sector organisations can apply for grants of up to 100% of costs	Upto £4,000

The total amount of funding available in this third tranche of Community Support Fund from Department for Communities is **£187,737**. Only those applications which provide an emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic will be considered. We expect a high number of applications to the fund. Council will review the number of applications received and the number of awards being made on a daily basis. The fund will close as soon as the available funds are allocated. Council reserve the right to close the fund at short notice.

If you are receiving support from another funder for your COVID-19 response project you must declare this in the application.

1.5 Who Can Apply?

Properly constituted Community & Voluntary Organisations with their own bank account are invited to apply. If you are not a constituted group you can link with a constituted group in your area who can apply on your behalf or can apply for a grant on your behalf as a part 2 to their own application. (Question 4b in the application form facilitates provision of details).

The constituted group will receive the award has financial responsibility for the audit process.

Applicants must provide a Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy / Policy Statement, a list of committee members, a copy of your most recent accounts or a recent bank statement and a signed copy of your constitution.

If you do not have a full Safeguarding Policy in place as yet, as a temporary measure, to enable you to submit an application you may submit a signed policy statement showing your intention to keep adults safe in the activities that you will be undertaking as part of your Covid-19 project. (KAS Adult Safeguarding Policy Statement Template available as Appendix 2).

For eligibility organisations must:

- Be based in the Causeway Coast and Glens Council area or be delivering a project targeting residents in the Causeway Coast and Glens Council area.

- Have a constitution / governing document that has been adopted at a public meeting showing clearly defined purposes that are for the public benefit in line with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.
- Be committed to Equal Opportunities in terms of organisational policies and the delivery of services to those being served or represented.
- Be non-party political and open to the full range of local opinion.
- Be able to demonstrate a fair and equitable ethos through established aims and objectives in accordance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998).
- Have appropriate and adequate insurance cover for all activities and all actions proceeding such as costs, claims, demands and liabilities whatsoever, arising from all or any of the group activities. To also ensure that any individuals or organisations worked with are properly insured.
- Ensure that all group activities abide by the law and that the necessary permissions are obtained for activities from the appropriate body/authority.
- Ensure that Child Protection Policy / Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedures are in place and adhered to as and where appropriate.
- Have a bank/building society account and keep a proper record of group accounts.
- Be able to produce an annual statement of independently audited or certified accounts, or be able to present a bank statement in the case of newly established groups.
- Agree to Causeway Coast and Glens Council's promotion, monitoring, evaluation, and training procedures as required.

1.6 What can be funded?

Applicants can apply for grants of up to 100% of costs up to a maximum of £4,000 towards project costs.

Example expenditure includes:

- Co-ordination / Running costs for organisations to provide Covid-19 response / support including volunteer costs associated with the activity
- Purchase and delivery of groceries/food hampers and other essential items such as hygiene products (Organisations should in the first instance link with established food banks and Fareshare for provision of emergency food)
- Provision of meals - purchase of food, ingredients, containers etc
- Fuel poverty supports (oil stamps, electric and gas top ups etc) as long as a process to establish need is in place
- Digital devices and wifi vouchers or equipment (organisations can purchase equipment for their own online activities or to loan to members of the community in need as long as the organisation retains ownership of the asset and maintains an asset register (template can be provided)
- Activity packs, wellbeing packs
- Safe exercise activities
- Telephone service / regular telephone calls for vulnerable, isolated, elderly or those self-isolating
- Advertising, printing and promotion
- Small capital costs are eligible but the applicant must demonstrate how these items address the priorities of the fund.

1.7 What cannot be funded?

The following will not be eligible for funding from the COVID-19 Community Support Fund:

- Proposals that do not directly benefit Causeway Coast & Glens Council residents.
- Retrospective expenditure where services/items have already been obtained and paid.
- Applications where the applicant will have a personal financial benefit.
- Costs that are not auditable e.g. cash payments unsupported by an approved petty cash system.
- Costs towards banking charges and / or repayment of debt.
- Costs that can be claimed back from elsewhere e.g. VAT.
- Alcohol

1.8 Exclusions

It is important to note that this funding programme will not award grants to the following:

- Individuals
- Groups operating outside the Causeway Coast and Glens Council area
- Political Organisations
- Statutory organisations
-

2.0 How to answer the questions.

Applications should be submitted online via Council's Online Funding Hub. You can access the hub through Council's homepage www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk and click on funding or go straight to the online hub at <http://causeway.eformz.info>

All questions must be completed as fully and concisely as possible. Please see below for help in completing your application:

Q1: In this question we would like you to tell us about the project or activities that you are planning. The purpose of the COVID-19 Community Support Fund is to provide emergency funding for community responses to address issues in the community emerging as a result of COVID-19. Tell us what you are going to do, how you are going to do it and when. (For example: shopping delivery service for over 70s x 2 times a week)

Q2: Please tick the boxes to indicate the District Electoral Area (DEA) and the Electoral Ward that your project will take place in; you can identify these from the map below:



Your response to this question is not assessed but it will ensure we are able to identify and address gaps in provision asap.

Q3: Please tick the relevant boxes to tell us about the people that your project will target.

Q4: Please describe your project and tell us how it addresses the COVID-19 Community Support Fund priorities.

Q5: Please tell us about the need for the project and how you know about this need? In this question tell us about the need for your project; what are the circumstances of the people that you will be supporting? eg older people living on their own, families on low income, lone parents, carers; and how have they been impacted by the pandemic? And tell us how you know about this need? Eg. you may have people contact you directly for support or neighbours and community members may tell you about people that are in need of support; you may take referrals from GPs or health professionals, or through schools, churches or other local knowledge channels.

Q6: Please provide a breakdown of all costs for your project and how much you are requesting from Council. Please refer to 1.6 of these guidance notes for what can be funded.

Q7: Please tell us of any other funding sources for your project including brief details of any other funding applied for.

3.0 How we assess and score your application

Every application that is received requesting a COVID-19 Community Support Fund will be assessed for the following:

- to ensure that the organisation is eligible to apply
- how well the proposal meets community needs and contributes to the COVID-19 Community Support Fund priorities

An acknowledgement receipt will be electronically issued to you once your submission has been received. Your application will be assessed as soon as possible and you will be notified within 5 working days.

3.1 Eligibility assessment

The assessments in respect of Part A of the application form are awarded a pass or fail eligibility rating. Eligibility is determined based on: Does your organisation have an acceptable, signed constitution, does your organisation have a management committee / list of committee members, has your organisation submitted a Vulnerable Adult Policy/Safeguarding Policy Statement, have you submitted your most recent accounts or a recent bank statement?

If the answer to any of these questions is no then your application will be deemed ineligible.

3.2 What if an application is not eligible?

If your application is not eligible, you will be notified immediately and the reasons will be outlined to you, it will not proceed to assessment against the criteria.

3.3 Assessment

If the organisation, based on the information supplied is able to satisfy the Council of their eligibility for the COVID-19 Community Support Fund they will be assessed according to established assessment criteria shown in the table below.

All questions will be scored out of 5 and weighting will be applied as detailed below:

Criteria	Score out of a possible 5	Weighting	Possible Score
1. Range and quality of project activities		X4	20
2. Number and type of beneficiaries		X4	20
3. How well the project promotes and addresses COVID-19 Community Support Fund priorities		X8	40
4. Need for the project and how this is evidenced		X4	20
			100

Applications must score 65% in order to avail of funding.

3.4 How decisions are made.

When the scores are finalised / assessments complete the applicants will be notified within 5 working days.

3.5 What happens when an application is successful?

If an application is successful, Council will issue a letter of offer which is a legal agreement with the organisation to deliver on the proposals outlined in their application form.

50% of the grant will be awarded upfront, Council will make payments directly into your nominated bank account. The remaining 50% will be paid once all required documentation is received by Council.

Groups in receipt of funding must agree to operate in line with a formal protocol for regulated volunteering, ensuring both volunteers and vulnerable and shielded individuals, are protected. This protocol can be accessed at:

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/volunteering-regulated-activity-protocol>

3.6 What happens if an application is unsuccessful?

An Appeals Process / Review Procedure is available if an application is unsuccessful. The purpose of this is to ensure that the decisions taken and procedures followed are applied fairly and consistently.

The Review will provide an independent process through which an applicant will have the opportunity to demonstrate to the Review Panel that either:

- the outcome was unreasonable or
- that the proper procedures were not followed

Appeals on any other grounds will not be considered.

3.7 Government Funding Database

Please be aware we are required to check the Government Funding Database (GFD) prior to making awards in order to avoid duplication of funding.

If registered on GFD we ask you to state your organisation's Unique Reference Number (URN) to help with this process. Details of grants awarded will be uploaded to the GFD, it is the responsibility of the applicant group to ensure that the organisation details held on GFD are up to date.

General Data Protection Regulation

- We will use the information you give us on the application form during assessment and for the life of any grant we award you to administer and analyse grants and for our own research.
- We may give copies of this information to individuals and organisations we consult when assessing applications, when monitoring grants and evaluating the way our funding programmes work and the effect they have. These organisations may include accountants, external evaluators and other organisations or groups involved in delivering the project.
- We may also share information with other government departments, organisations providing match funding and other organisations and individuals with a legitimate interest in applications and grants, or for the prevention or detection of fraud.
- We might use the data you provide for our own research. We recognise the need to maintain the confidentiality of vulnerable groups and their details will not be made public in any way, except as required by law.

Freedom of Information Act

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives members of the public the right to request any information that we hold, subject to certain exemption that may apply. This includes information received from third parties, such as, although not limited to, grant applicants, grant holders and contractors. If information is requested under the Freedom of Information Act we will release it, subject to exemptions; although we may consult with you first. If you think that information you are providing may be exempt from release if requested, you should let us know when you apply. For further information please visit the Information Commissioner's Office at www.ico.gov.uk



Resource 1.3 Sample Adult Safeguarding Policy Statement

A sample adult safeguarding policy statement is a statement of your intention to keep adults safe while in the care of your organisation.

It should be a simple statement, which reflects the nature and activities of your organisation such as:

Our commitment to safeguard

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights; it can take many forms. The staff and volunteers in (organisation name) are committed to practice which promotes the welfare of adults at risk and safeguards them from harm.

Staff and volunteers in our organisation accept and recognise our responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues that cause adults harm, and to establish and maintain a safe environment for them. We will not tolerate any form of abuse wherever it occurs or whoever is responsible. We are committed to promoting an atmosphere of inclusion, transparency and openness and are open to feedback from the people who use our services, carers, advocates, our staff and our volunteers with a view to how we may continuously improve our services/activities.

We will endeavour to safeguard the adults we work with and care for by:

- Adhering to our adult safeguarding policy and ensuring that it is supported by robust procedures;
- Carefully following the procedures laid down for the recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers;
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training;
- Implementing clear procedures for raising awareness of and responding to abuse within the organisation and for reporting concerns to statutory agencies that need to know, while involving adults at risk and their carers appropriately;
- Ensuring general safety and risk management procedures are adhered to;
- Promoting full participation and having clear procedures for dealing with concerns and complaints;
- Managing personal information, confidentiality and information sharing; and
- Implementing a code of behaviour for staff and volunteers.

We will review our policy, procedures, code of behaviour and practice at regular intervals, at least once every three years.

Author:

Publication date:

Approved by:	
Effective from:	
For attention of and action by:	Members of the Senior Management Team, Management Committee/Group; managers and leaders; staff and volunteers, service users; carers and advocates; and visitors.
Review date:	
Adult Safeguarding Champion	(Name and Contact details)



Registration No. NIC101309

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