

EPIC Grant Programme

Guidance Notes - £10,001 to £40,000

1. Introduction

(i) Purpose of the Fund

This funding is part of an innovative 5-year partnership with the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation that focuses on activity that will build greater long-term resilience within Sandwell's communities at grassroots level. The purpose of the **EPIC (Enabling People In Communities) Grant Programme** is to enable local voluntary and community organisations to access grants, to support the following broad outcomes:

- Increased resilience within communities
- Increased self-reliance
- Improved and stronger relationships within the community
- Residents are involved in the design and delivery of activities that make a positive change in their communities
- Asset and strengths based – see [Appendix 2](#) for the ABCD methodology that the programme is working to.

(ii) Eligibility

To be eligible to apply, organisations are required to meet the criteria as set out in [Appendix 1](#).

(iii) Application Content

The current COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on voluntary and community groups and the communities they support, and will continue to have far-reaching consequences going forward. Many of the ways in which groups have tackled the issues of loneliness, social isolation, and healthy living within their communities have changed significantly – some have ceased/been suspended, others have been adapted to make greater use of technology – but tackling these challenges remains a high priority both now and in the future.

Given that the key focus of the overall programme is that of building '*greater long-term resilience within Sandwell's communities at grassroots level*', for this next round of EPIC funding we are particularly interested to receive applications that have a specific focus on the following themes **and that are shaped by the learnings and experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic**, for example, how have services needed to adapt in order to provide support? What might communities need to learn/be upskilled in to make them better able to respond to / cope with future challenges?

- **Health and Wellbeing:** Projects that have a positive impact on an individual's quality of life, physical and mental health.
- **Reducing Isolation and loneliness:** across all age ranges.

Cont...

Isolation refers to separation from social or family contact, community involvement, or access to services.

Loneliness is an unwelcome feeling of lack, or loss, of companionship as defined by 'Strategy for Tackling Loneliness 2018'. Often major life events/changes can trigger loneliness e.g. losing your job, retirement, ill health, starting school/university.

(iv) Exclusions

- **Capital Expenditure:** Whilst this is not a programme to fund significant 'capital' expenditure, items that are considered relevant and proportionate to the proposed delivery will be considered and need to be detailed in the proposed budget breakdown.
- **Direct Salary Costs:** Funds can be used to support extra capacity to deliver this project e.g. sessional workers, tutors or extra capacity for existing staff. It can also be used to fund new posts, where appropriate (having considered the long term viability/sustainability of such an option). Please keep in mind that this grant programme is about engaging and supporting communities to do more for themselves.

(v) Grant Size

- Applications for a grant between £10,001 and £40,000, for a project to be delivered by 31st March 2023.

2. Grant Timeline and Process

(i) Timeline

- Details of the current application window will be published on our website: www.scvo.info

(ii) Process

Applying for funding will involve a 2 stage process.

Stage 1: a submission of an application form that will be assessed by a panel.

Stage 2: a presentation (maximum 20 minutes) to a mixed Panel of interested parties followed by a question and answer session that will include an opportunity to describe your proposed activity and operating budget in greater detail. It's an opportunity to tell us your story.

Successful Stage 1 applicants proceeding to Stage 2 will be offered 1-1 support from SCVO to help prepare for the Panel presentation and to identify any potential capacity building needs.

3. Grant Conditions (Summary)

- Organisations in receipt of funding will be required to participate in data capture to ensure we capture data/evaluation/learning. A short training session will be delivered for data collection.
- By participating in data capture and the evaluation, your organisation will ensure that it complies with data protection legislation.
- Grant funding must only be used for the proposed delivery applied for – if you want/need to change any part of the proposal, you must contact us and tell us:
 - What you want to change
 - Why you want to change it
 - Any difference to the proposed outcomes / impact
- Before making any changes you must wait for us to agree them in writing;

- You will have the right kind of insurance in place for your proposed activity;
- You will let us talk about your Programme-funded activity in our publicity if we want to do this;
- You cannot use the grant money for any activity that takes place **BEFORE** your application is approved.
- If you are publicising your activity you should mention who has helped with your funding, we can provide the relevant logos;
- Your Programme-funded activity must be a legal activity;
- The grant will be paid into a bank account that is in the name of your organisation and that requires 2 signatories for payment authorisations (we will ask for this once your grant has been approved) – if that is not the case we will need to agree a suitable alternative (at our discretion) **BEFORE** your activity takes place;
- Whilst we may not directly ask for evidence of your grant spending, you will need to keep receipts for activity expenditure in order to show good money management practice.
- Once a funded project under EPIC has been completed, you can apply for another project which can be a different project or an extension of the previous project as long as you can demonstrate how the learning has shaped the project and enhanced it.

4. Notes on Completing the Application Form

(i) General Advice on Completing the Application

- Please read through the application form, and these guidance notes, **before** you begin so that you answer the questions as fully as possible.
- **Do not exceed the word count** on the questions as the words that are beyond the limit will be discounted. There is no minimum word count, but the more relevant information you can provide to the panel the better they will understand your organisation and proposal.
- **Do not assume** that the Grant Panel knows your organisation, even if your organisation has received funding from SCVO.
- Please complete **ALL** questions and sections within the application form.

Eligibility – please ensure you have read [Appendix 1](#) of the guidance notes and ticked to confirm that your organisation meets the requirements.

Your Group / Organisation: please provide FULL contact details for your organisation. If you are registered with Charity Commission or Companies House, please state the registered name and number(s) of your organisation with the relevant regulator e.g. Companies House, Charity Commission, Financial Conduct Authority.

Financial year end: Please state your financial year end and include a copy of your most recent financial information.

Q1. Please state how much money, you are applying for, (between £10,001 and £40,000)

When you consider how much to apply for, think about it from a strengths-based perspective. How can you encourage communities to look around to see what resources they already have (e.g. skills, experience, talents and underused buildings) and encourage a culture of people doing things for themselves?

Q2. What is the name of your project?

Please state the name of your project.

Q3. Describe your project:

Provide details of what it is you want to do, where it will take place, when it will happen...so that we can get a detailed picture of the proposal. We are interested in growing and developing the activities you already undertake but also exploring new creative ideas, **particularly those that have been informed by experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic**. How might what you are proposing to deliver help communities to be better placed to tackle future challenges?

Q4. What evidence/research have you undertaken to support your proposed project?

e.g. who have you spoken to, what makes you confident of this project making a positive change? How have/will residents be actively involved in project design?

Please read [Appendix 2](#) for the ABCD methodology relevant to this programme.

For this round, please tell us how the learnings from your experience of the COVID-19 pandemic have helped to shape this project proposal.

Please provide as much detail as possible to evidence that you have gathered input from a wide range of sources and how this has contributed to the development of your proposed project e.g. consultation/conversation, focus groups, talking to partners, waiting lists etc.

You can include local trends and statistics but we are really interested in how you have developed your idea by involving people from the community.

Q5. By the end of your project delivery, how will your project have;

- a) Made a difference? - What changes will you see in individuals/communities being supported with this delivery. How will you evidence this? What do you hope will be the long-term impact?
- b) Built on the strengths, skills, knowledge of local residents – e.g. buildings, transport, underused resources, people etc. that already exist in the community.
- c) Improved relationships within the community? – e.g. different parts of the community getting to know each other that helps to increase understanding of those who are similar and/or different.
- d) Supported communities to tackle challenges and/or deliver activities? - Participation of people in ways that strengthen community relationships, resources, and its capacity to cope ('bounce back') and move forward. ***As a result of the experiences from the COVID-19 pandemic, how will communities be better-placed/prepared to tackle future challenges?***

Q6. Who does your project aim to benefit?

Tell us about the beneficiaries group(s) that your project will work with over its lifetime e.g. young people, older people, volunteers etc.

Q7. How does the proposed activity complement and link with other local existing initiatives?

Demonstrate that you are aware of similar initiatives in the local area and how your project links with these initiatives and builds on any learning. If your proposed project is similar to others, what makes your idea distinct or different?

Q8. Please complete budget table

When completing the budget table, calculate the full cost of the project, including all directly related costs and consider the implications of any items potentially affected by inflation. If the funding requested forms part of a larger project, please detail full project cost in the total cost column and how much you are applying for from the EPIC grant funding for each budget category.

In the 'other cost' row, if you are adding evaluation costs in the budget, please ensure that these costs are proportionate to the size of the project.

In kind support could include volunteer time, refreshments, printing etc.

Q9. What do you think are the most significant risks and challenges you will face that may stop you achieving the desired changes? What measures have/are you intending to put in place to reduce these risks?

An understanding of the risks and pitfalls of the planned activity is important, particularly if this is something that has not been tried before, as is an awareness of how the funded activity might impact your group or organisation adversely, e.g. through demands on staffing, resources, or requirements for new systems or skills.

Q10. What are your plans for this activity/project when it finishes?

E.g. will this project continue? If so, what are your plans to ensure it continues? This can range from raising more funds to building the capacity of volunteers to continue delivery. If you have funded salary costs for an employee, consider what the implications will be. Consider what will happen to activities, learning and resources when the project finishes.

If you require any assistance with making your application, please contact SCVO as follows:

- **Community Partnerships Coach:** Liz Webster – email: liz@scvo.info / mobile: 07923 259821

Or

- **Operations Manager / Deputy CEO:** Stuart Ashmore – email: stuart@scvo.info / mobile: 07703 823226

Appendix 1

Eligibility criteria for the EPIC Grant programme (Esmée Fairbairn Partnership).

To be eligible to apply to the EPIC grant programme, you will need to be one of the following types of organisation:

- **A voluntary organisation/group** (a formal organisation by a management body made up of volunteers who are engaged in that activity for environmental, economic or social good.)
- **A community organisation/group** (a less formally organised body run by a management body made up of volunteers who are engaged in that activity for environmental, economic or social good.)
- **A tenants and residents group**
- **A faith group**
- **Most co-operatives and social enterprises** (provided all profits are retained for the benefit of the members of community served)
- **Most sports organisations**

that have one or more of the following structures/forms:

- Unincorporated groups (that have a written constitution/set of rules (governing document) that sets out the purpose of the group and how it is managed)
- Registered charity (incl. CIO)
- Company limited by guarantee
- Community Interest Company limited by guarantee
- Community Interest Company limited by shares (with a 100% asset lock clause to ensure that funds or assets can only be transferred to a named organisation or cause with charitable objects aligned to the applicant)
- Community benefit society
- Co-operative

Additionally, organisations need to be able to demonstrate that they:

- operate on the basis of being wholly not-for-profit and/or do not distribute profits/assets for personal or private gain
- have a Board or Management Committee comprising of a minimum of 3 members (ideally unrelated) who give their time in a voluntary (unpaid) capacity. If this Committee is not locally based, the organisation should demonstrate its long-term commitment to Sandwell.
- Are actively delivering services in Sandwell or undertaking activities for the benefit of Sandwell Communities.

Principally reinvest any financial surpluses to further social, environmental or cultural objectives that bring a significant community benefit to Sandwell (at least 50% of any financial surpluses need to be reinvested in Sandwell for community benefit).

Appendix 2

Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) ...

“...is a methodology for the sustainable development of communities based on their strengths and potentials.

It involves assessing the resources, skills, and experience available in a community; organising the community around issues that move its members into action; and then determining and taking appropriate action.”

(John L. McKnight and John P. Kretzmann)

This methodology starts with the community's own assets and resources as the basis for development; it empowers the people of the community by encouraging them to utilise what they already possess. It starts with a '**what's strong**' approach, rather than a '**what's wrong**' one.

But, crucially, the model recognises that such communities don't '*have all the answers or resources*' to solve community problems (as might otherwise be implied by the definition) – indeed, it is most effective when community capacity is developed **alongside** interventions from external sources.

ABCD is built on 4 pillars or foundations...

- it focuses on community assets and strengths rather than problems and needs.
- it identifies and mobilises individual and community assets, skills and passions.
- it is community driven – “building communities from the inside out”.
- it is relationship driven.

The emphasis in ABCD is about:

LOCAL:

- Knowledge
- Culture
- Resources
- Skills
- Processes

By implication, these '*local assets*' will be best known by people from the local community ... so community members become the drivers of change ... leading from the inside-out.

As such, they become active 'citizens' rather than 'clients' receiving a service; from *passive recipients* to **active citizens**.

We invite local people to ask of each other, "*what can we do best for ourselves and each other?*"

By engaging with that question people are enabled to identify, connect and mobilise what they have, to make change happen. **That puts them in the driving seat of change.**

They take the lead by using what they have, to secure what they need. In this way, residents also assume a powerful lead in directing outside helpers in how best they can be helpful. Since, until residents know what they have which is local and within their control, they cannot know what they need from outside (what is not local and not within their control).