

Communities Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund

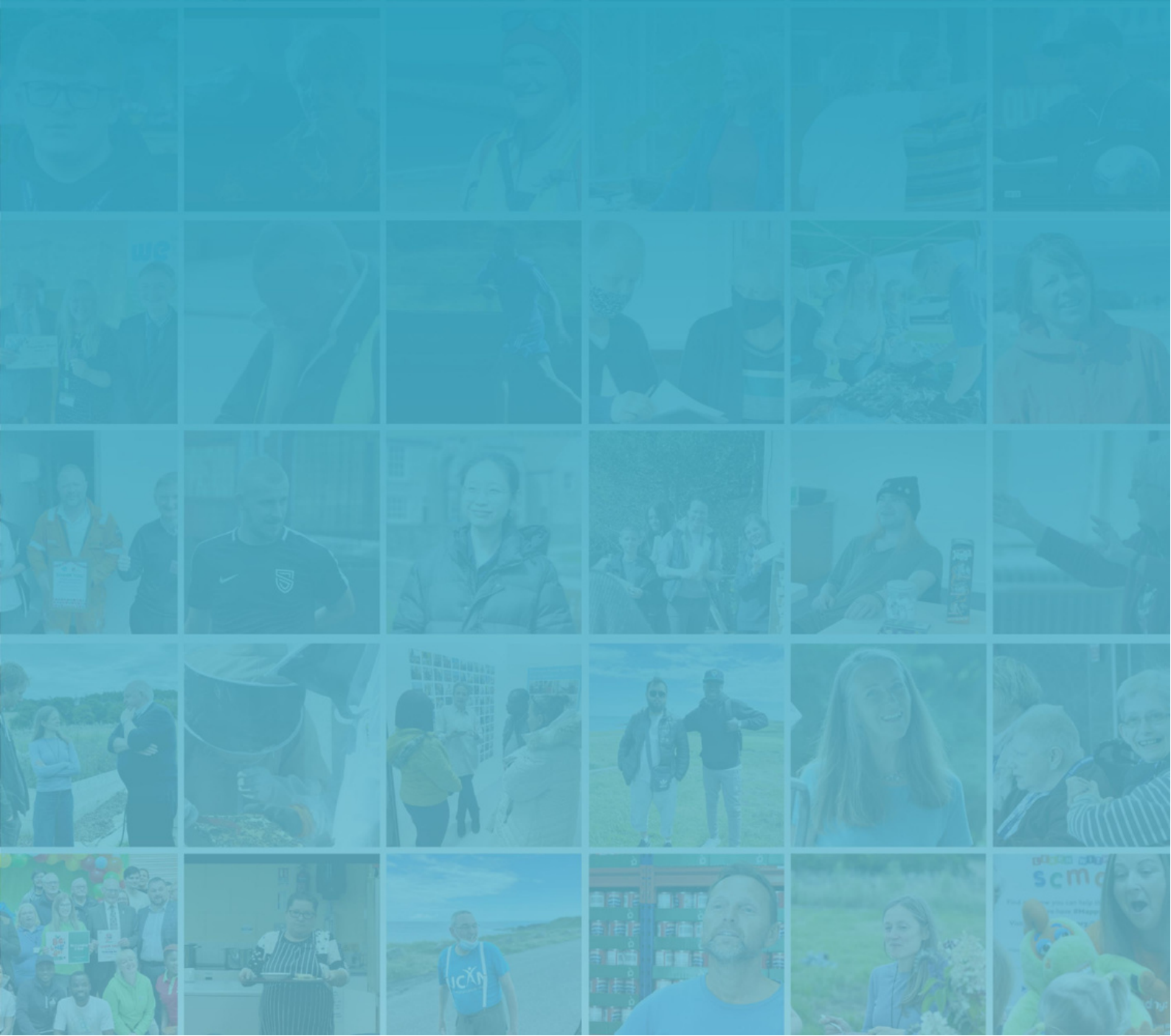
Year 3 Fund Guidance for Aberdeen City



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About the Fund

The Communities Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund (hereinafter referred to as the Fund) was established by the Scottish Government in 2021 to provide grants to grassroots community groups and organisations across Scotland in response to the mental health need arising from the pandemic. Third Sector Interfaces have distributed £36 million across Scotland; with 3300 grants being awarded to community organisations who are now tackling priority issues within the adult population such as suicide prevention, social isolation, and loneliness, and in year 2, poverty and inequalities in response to the cost-of-living crisis.

ACVO TSI is again delighted to be managing the distribution of £567,000 for Year 3 that will continue to support projects that develop a culture of mental health prevention and strengthen the resilience of communities in Aberdeen City.

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Introduction

In April 2023, a new £15 million investment in the Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund was announced by the Scottish Government by the Scottish Cabinet Secretary for NHS Recovery, Health, and Social Care, Micheal Matheson. This commitment aligns with the priority to boost mental health and wellbeing that was set out in the [Scottish Governments Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#) published in June 2023.

Building on the success of year one and year two, this vital financial support will enable the third sector to deliver new and existing activities and projects that improve mental health and wellbeing in communities across Scotland. The Fund will again be distributed by Third Sector Interfaces (TSIs) to community groups and organisations.

The fund in Aberdeen City

A total of £1,341,000 has been distributed by ACVO TSI to support 168 projects and activities during 2021 and 2022 across Aberdeen City. ACVO is again delighted to be managing the distribution of £567,000 this year, with **the Fund opening for applications on Friday, 15th September**.

For year three, there will be one simple application phase and two application levels. To reflect inflationary rises that have significantly impacted on costs associated with running an activity or project, the Fund Partnership Group has increased the grant amount that can be applied for. Level 1 has increased to £3000, and Level 2 is now £3001-£15000.

To ensure that the fund supports as many organisations as possible across the City, a maximum of TWO applications can be funded, and a maximum of £18000 can be awarded to any one organisation. This equates to one Level 1 and one Level 2 application. Please ensure that you submit your application(s) as early as possible. Although the Fund officially must close by March 2024, last year the majority of funding had been distributed within eight weeks of being opened.

****PLEASE DON'T DELAY IN APPLYING TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT.****

How much organisations can apply for

The following levels are being applied to the Fund:

Funding Level	Funds Available	Max. Income of the Group/Organisation
1 (inc. unconstituted groups)	£0 - £3000	Up to £250,000 in the most recent financial year
2 (constituted groups only)	£3001 - £15000	No limit on income

The ambition of the Fund is to support initiatives which promote mental health and wellbeing at a small scale, grass roots, community level, no matter how small or inexperienced the organisation may be. National organisations undertaking initiatives in Aberdeen City are not excluded to apply, however they are not the focus. This is why income parameters have been applied to Level 1.

Fund outcomes, aims and priorities (defined by the Scottish Government)

The overarching aim of the Fund is to support community-based initiatives that promote and develop good mental health and wellbeing and/or mitigate and protect against the impact of distress and mental ill health within the adult population (aged 16 or over), with a particular focus on prevention and early intervention.

Specifically, the Fund aims to:

1. Tackle mental health inequalities through supporting a range of 'at risk' groups.
2. Address priority issues of social isolation and loneliness, suicide prevention and poverty and inequality with a particular emphasis on responding to the cost-of-living crisis and support to those facing socio-economic disadvantage.
3. Support small 'grass roots' community groups and organisations to deliver activities.
4. Provide opportunities for people to connect with each other, build trusted relationships and revitalise communities.

The Fund directly contributes to Outcome 4 of the [Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#) published in June 2023, to:

“Better equip communities to support people’s mental health and wellbeing and provide opportunities to connect with others”.

It also clearly supports the following three key areas of focus cited within the Strategy:

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing for the whole population, improving understanding and tackling stigma, inequality, and discrimination.
- Prevent mental health issues occurring or escalating and tackle underlying causes, adversities, and inequalities wherever possible.
- Provide mental health and wellbeing support and care, ensuring people and communities can access the right information, skills, services, and opportunities in the right place at the right time, using a person-centred approach.

The Fund also seeks to contribute to the following national outcomes from the National Performance Framework:

- We are healthy and active.
- We will live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe.
- We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth, and power more equally.

The intended outcomes of the Fund are to:

- Develop a culture of mental wellbeing and prevention within local communities and across Scotland with improved awareness of how we can all stay well and help ourselves and others.
- Foster a strategic and preventative approach to improving community mental health.
- Support the resilience of communities and investing in their capacity to develop their own solutions, including through strong local partnerships.
- Tackle the social determinants of mental health by targeting resources and collaborating with other initiatives to tackle poverty and inequality.



Who can apply

Applications can only be accepted from voluntary, 'not for profit' organisations, associations, groups and clubs or consortiums/partnerships which have a strong community focus for their activities.

The range of organisations eligible to apply are:

- Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisations (SCIO)
- Unincorporated Associations
- Companies Limited by Guarantee
- Trusts
- Not-for-profit company or asset locked company or Community Interest Companies (CIC)
- Cooperative and Community Benefit Societies
- Community Councils
- Unconstituted Groups*

(*Unconstituted Groups have the opportunity to apply for Level 1 grants (up to £3000). If your group doesn't have its own bank account, an alternative constitute group or third sector organisation (such as a local community centre) would be allowed to hold the grant on your behalf. The group would be expected to seek and manage this arrangement. The organisation 'hosting' the grant would simply need to complete the '**Hosted Bank Account Form**', and this would be submitted to ACVO along with the application form.)

- Parent Councils**

(**Parent Councils are eligible to apply, subject to the funded activities meeting the aims of the Fund and specifically focusing on supporting young people aged 16 or over or supporting adults rather than their children. Any Parent Council applying to this fund must have a statutory duty to keep proper accounts, for which there may already be legal and regulatory requirements for them to do so depending on the status of the Parent Council, for example, some parent councils are registered with OSCR as a charity.

What can and cannot be funded

ACVO encourages applications that will support one or more of the following groups:

- Women, particularly women experiencing gender-based violence.
- People with a long-term health condition or disability.
- People from a Minority Ethnic background.
- Refugees and those with no recourse to public funds.
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) communities.
- People facing socio-economic disadvantage.
- People experiencing severe and multiple disadvantage.
- People with diagnosed mental illness; people affected by psychological trauma (including adverse childhood experiences).
- People who have experienced bereavement or loss.
- People disadvantaged by geographical location (particularly remote and rural areas).
- Older people (aged 65 and above).
- Unpaid Carers.
- People with Dementia/Alzheimer's disease

The Fund will support applications for the maintenance or expansion of existing activity; however emphasis is placed on innovative new activity that provides additionality.

The focus of the Fund is to support the adult population (defined as members of the population aged 16 years and over). Children can be a secondary beneficiary of the fund; however the primary beneficiary must be adults from an 'at risk' group. The Children and Young People Community Support Fund, managed by local authorities, focuses on funding projects and activities aimed at supporting children and young people.

We Can Fund

Equipment

One-off events

Hall hire for community spaces

Staff costs (these should be one off or fixed term)

Training costs

Utilities/running costs

Volunteer expenses

Small capital spend up to £5000 – e.g. construction, refurbishment and/or purchase of buildings, amenities or vehicles

We Cannot Fund

Contingency costs, loans, endowments, or interest

Electricity generation and feed-in tariff payment

Political or religious campaigning (please note that faith-based organisations are eligible to apply with the exclusion of any religious campaigning activities or activities restricted only to members of the faith-based organisation. TSIs should undertake due diligence around these matters).

Profit-making/fundraising activities

VAT you can reclaim

Transport

Statutory activities

Overseas travel

Alcohol

Direct therapeutic interventions, such as counselling or CBT

Initiatives whose primary beneficiaries are under 16 years old.

Funding of counselling and other therapeutic treatments

The Fund is not intended to support “treatment” focused projects and is not meant to replace funding for direct therapeutic interventions in the community, such as counselling or CBT. The Fund aims to provide a range of broader community supports that can complement clinical care. It provides an opportunity to test change ideas and approaches that aim to provide emotional and practical support to individuals at an early intervention and/or preventative level. This will hopefully reduce the escalation of and need for clinical interventions and care.

There are other funding streams which can support counselling services in various realms (for example, the Scottish Government Survivors of Childhood Abuse Support Fund and Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Fund).

For any proposals that do involve potential for clinically trained staff delivering therapeutic interventions, there should be clear arrangements in place for clinical supervision and governance. Specifically with regards to counselling support, it should conform to agreed professional standards, such as those provided by COSCA and BACP.

If you are not sure whether your project meets the fund criteria, please email claire.shaw@acvo.org.uk. Claire will then arrange an online call to discuss the eligibility of your project/activity.



The application process

The ACVO website provides the following for applicants:

- **Level 1 application form – up to £3000**
- **Level 2 application form - £3001 - £15000**

Please ensure you select the correct application form, dependant on the size of your grant. Wherever possible, we would prefer to receive applications via our online process; however an application form can be emailed to you if you would prefer to complete it offline.

There is a facility to save the application form and come back to it later, enabling you to complete it when it is convenient. Once you have submitted your application form, you will receive an automated email confirmation, which will include a copy of your application form.

Once your application has been received, we will check to ensure that all key pieces of information are complete, the required attachments have been sent and can be opened. We will endeavour to contact groups and organisations as soon as possible if there is a need for clarification or additional information, however this may result in a delay to the assessment process.

The assessment process

The assessment team will aim to assess Level 1 and Level 2 applications within five working days. However, this will be dependent on the number of applications received in any given week.

If the Fund is still open to applications, ACVO will also not be assessing applications between Tuesday 19th December 2023 and Sunday 7th January 2024.

All assessors will be required to complete a Declaration of Interest form prior to joining the assessment team. If an application is received from any group or organisation that is named on anyone's declaration of interests' form, that person will not be able to assess the application and will be substituted for the purpose of that individual application.

Please note that ACVO's Funding Officer and Development Officer for Governance will both be excluded from the assessment process, enabling them to support groups throughout the applications process.

Once an assessment has been completed, applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application. This will normally be one of the following:

- Your application has been approved and a grant offer letter will be emailed to you for you to sign and submit to ACVO before we can make a payment to you?
- Your application is on hold because we need more information from you. We will ask for any specific information that we need.
- Your application will be considered again when the Assessment Panel next meets, providing we have received everything we have asked for.
- Your application has not been approved, and we are not able to offer you a grant from this fund. If this is the case, we will provide some brief feedback on why we feel this is the case and our Funding Officer will offer support to identify other potential funding opportunities.

The payment process

ACVO is aiming to make payments for Level 1 and Level 2 approved grants into organisations bank accounts on a weekly basis. If your application has been approved, and we have received your signed grant acceptance letter, then we aim to have the payment to your organisation within five working days.

Please note that no payments will occur between Tuesday 19th December 2023 and Tuesday 9th January 2024, as ACVO closes over the Christmas and New Year period.

Project evaluation and reporting

For year 3, all grants provided by The Fund, will only require an end of year report that ACVO will manage. The Scottish Government has asked that the following questions be asked to evaluate impact:

- What we were expected to do and what we actually did: Please outline activities undertaken, specifically against original plan, including details of the number of activities, numbers of participants benefitting and who the main beneficiaries were (max 250 words)
- Please let us know of any achievements to date that you are particularly proud of, or that demonstrate the difference made to individuals (max 250 words). If you wish to include testimonials or quotes, please use this space.
- Please tell us how you achieved each of your proposed outcomes: *The outcomes your project should have delivered against were in your funding agreement and you **MUST** use these outcomes as described.
 - The outcome
 - What methods were used to gather evidence
 - Did you achieve the outcome? What are the indicators that demonstrate success?
- Challenges/changes (max 100 words): Any problems you encountered that slowed progress, stopped the outcomes happening or things that were changed.

ACVO will be managing the evaluation process on behalf of the Scottish Government for year 3. We will send out a questionnaire at the beginning of March 2024 to gather this feedback, enabling us to submit our evaluation report in April 2024.

Accessing support

To access further advice or support relating to the Fund, the application process, or for any other reason, please email ACVO's Funding Officer, Claire Shaw at claire.shaw@acvo.org.uk. Claire will either contact you directly or forward your request onto the appropriate team member to help you with your enquiry.

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