



# LIFT Community Grants

Local Investment in Learning Paths to Work

**A skills and employability funding programme for Norfolk and Suffolk**

## APPLICANT HANDBOOK

Guidance for applicants to the LIFT Community Grants Funding Programme via the Norfolk & Suffolk LIFT Community Grants Boards

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### Version Control

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## 1. What are Community Grants?

Community Grants are available to community and voluntary organisations to provide learning opportunities, training or services that will help people to improve their chances of obtaining work.

Community Grants enable third sector and other organisations, which would not normally be able to access European Social Funding (ESF), to apply for a small ESF grant.

Community Grants is for projects that support individuals who have difficulty accessing mainstream learning & skills provisions and / or ESF funded support. The provision supported by a Community Grants must not duplicate provision that is already supported through existing Skills Funding Agency or DWP mainstream provision or ESF Co-Financing.

## 2. Overview of Community Grants

ESF Community Grants is intended for unemployed and economically inactive people who face barriers to employment, who are over the age of 16. It is not intended to provide mainstream training activity, but rather to provide community-level support to hard-to-reach participants can get closer to accessing mainstream activity. Outcomes are based on progression, rather than achievement of jobs or qualifications. Projects could cover:

- **Removal of Barriers:** This could include consultation and first contact engagement activities, as well as mentoring and appointing staff to promote employment to target groups.
- **Soft Skills:** Soft skills are personal attributes that enhance an individual's interactions, job performance and career prospects. These are skills which do not lead to qualifications, but are vital for employment success, such as confidence building or communication and presentation skills which can be acquired in a variety of ways, including through volunteering.
- **Non-Accredited Learning:** This covers both formal and non-formal provision which does not lead directly to any form of external accreditation, award or qualification. Activities might include taster work experience including voluntary work, sessional training on bespoke or one-off courses, initial help with basic skills.
- **Accredited Learning:** This programme is primarily aimed at people a long way from the job market. It is expected that the projects will in the main use non-accredited training and soft skills as the most appropriate support to the targeted individuals, but some community groups may want to offer accredited

learning. Under certain criteria, these outcomes will be funded, but please contact us first to find out if your accredited learning project would be eligible.

It is key to ensure that the individuals you recruit for the programme are eligible and willing to give you personal information about their circumstances, and eligibility to work in the UK and receive ESF funded support before they enrol on learning and support offer through your project.

The Skills Funding Agency requires data from the individuals that enrol on the programme. The information individuals give will not be used for sale or marketing purposes that are not related to training and education. Information may be shared with other organisations related to education and training. Individuals have the option to opt out of being contacted in relation to course and learning opportunities, and surveys and research conducted by mail or telephone. Organisations must follow Skills Funding Agency confidentiality guidelines.

Projects delivered with funding through Community Grants should be implementing and addressing equal opportunities as well as sustainability project management.

Appropriate action should be taken to reduce or mitigate the environmental impact of projects. The application form therefore has a question designated for organisations to demonstrate how they will address the cross-cutting themes of equal opportunities and sustainability. Organisations must take account of accessibility for disabled people.

### **3. Who can apply?**

We welcome applications from VCSE and other small organisations in the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (NALEP) area i.e. Norfolk and Suffolk.

Applicant organisations must have income/turnover of less than 10 million Euros in the last financial year (£8.61m at time of writing) and fewer than 50 full time equivalent employees. (Part time and seasonal workers are counted as a fraction of a full time employee.)

Applicants must:

- Have a constitution of rules saying how the organisation is managed and what it does.
- Be able to demonstrate complete autonomy from any organisation that has in excess of £8.61million annual income or 50 or more full time equivalent employees.
- Have accounts that show how the organisation spends its money every year, and systems recording income and expenditure.

- Have a named individual who will be responsible for the grant - we will need a name, address, telephone number and an email address.
- Sub-contracting with other organisations is not permitted on this project.
- Describe exactly for what the grant will be used for.
- Describe what you want to do with the grant. Importantly, how is it new or additional to what your organisation normally does?
- Describe how you will judge whether your project is being delivered successfully or not. What information will you collect?
- Publicise the grant on all paperwork involved with your project. The requirements will be set out in the grant agreement letter.

#### **4. Who can benefit from a Community Grant Funded Project?**

To be eligible for support from a project funded by a Community Grant project participants must be aged 16 or over, be unemployed or economically inactive and live in Norfolk or Suffolk.

#### **5. What sort of projects will be awarded a grant.**

Funded projects must support groups of unemployed or inactive participants to engage with and benefit from at least one, accessible and structured learning course/programme or practical experience/skills project. The aim should be to move people closer to or into employment and/or into more formal learning & skills provision.

The activity must be designed to develop their skills, build their confidence and to raise their aspirations and enthusiasm for engaging with other learning and skills provision. Also to explore and apply for local employment or self-employment opportunities. Applications are particularly welcome for projects that are new, innovative or unusual and applicants can apply for a Community Grant for a range of activities.

We would be particularly interested in supporting activity such as:

- Engagement activities to provide support to individuals to overcome barriers to learning and/or employment
- Confidence building and other soft skills support
- Initial help with Basic Skills and accessing free Basic Skills provision
- Work experience and voluntary work where acquisition of skills is structured,
- Non-accredited learning
- Getting ready for interviews
- Job search skills
- Exploring self-employment options and what that involves.

- Addressing isolation and loneliness as added value

Hard and soft outcomes will be measured to demonstrate the distance the learner travels on the programme. Templates to record this activity will be provided.

Project activities up to 31<sup>st</sup> July can be supported.

The last date for 'participant starts' on a funded project is 31 December 2020.

## **6. What are the priorities for Community Grants in Norfolk & Suffolk?**

All funded projects must support groups of eligible participants to engage with, and benefit from, accessible, structured learning. The learning project must be delivered in Norfolk or Suffolk.

Some priority will be given to projects that will:

- 1) Align with the objectives of Inclusive Growth by supporting people living in Norfolk or Suffolk who are facing barriers to work, to move closer to or into skilled employment on at least the Living Wage in order to increase household incomes and standards of living.
- 2) Provide a first step towards, and route into jobs and apprenticeships in sectors that offer a career path and further skills development. In particular the sectors that have a New Anglia LEP Sector Skills Plan (see [www.newanglia.co.uk/sector-skills/plans/](http://www.newanglia.co.uk/sector-skills/plans/))\*
- 3) Align with work in the 'Opportunities Areas' of Norwich and Ipswich supporting young people aged 16+ and/or addressing generational worklessness in those areas.
- 4) Address issues of limited access to employability support for those living in market or coastal towns and in more rural areas.
- 5) Support those who face barriers to work and/or a disadvantage in the jobs market, for example:

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- People who have been long term unemployed
- People with disabilities and health conditions
- NEET Young people aged 16+
- People aged 50 or over
- Carers
- Lone Parents
- People from ethnic minorities
- Ex Offenders
- Homeless people
- Migrants and refugees

\* Natasha Waller, Skills Manager at the LEP is able to advise projects on local apprenticeships and training provision available in the key sectors with a Sector Skills Plan. She can be contacted on [natasha.waller@newanglia.co.uk](mailto:natasha.waller@newanglia.co.uk)

## **7. How much funding is available for a project?**

Grants are available up to a maximum of £20,000 per project.

LIFT Community Grants can be used to cover up to 100% of the cost of a project.

If the project costs more than £20,000, before a Community Grant can be paid evidence will be required that the remaining funds or in-kind support has been secured to deliver the project.

Organisations can apply for a maximum of one grant in any one funding round.

There will be up to 11 rounds of funding in total with the last grant awarded by October 2020 at the latest.

## **8. What sort of project costs are eligible for a grant?**

The following costs if essential to the project can be included in your budget/grant request.

- Staff costs directly related to delivering your project (including reasonable administration costs to complete the reporting, claims and monitoring requirements) as long as they are where not already funded through other sources
- Other costs of delivering training, working experience and other learning and skills activities
- Running costs of the project (e.g. stationery, room hire, marketing and publicity costs). You will need to include a breakdown on your application form of these costs and how they have been calculated.
- Capital purchases normally under £500 (i.e. small capital items in line with ESF guidance – a computer, monitor, keyboard, printer and software counts as one item).
- In exceptional circumstances we can consider items of up to £1,000 but you will need to explain why the item is necessary in order for you to deliver the project with a high level of project outcomes to demonstrate good value for money.
- Costs directly associated with the participants involvement in the project for example, travel costs, childcare costs, adult carer costs. Food and refreshments for participants)
- Administration costs directly associated with the project.

## **9. What type of costs are not eligible for a grant?**

- Projects not delivered in Norfolk or Suffolk

- Physical environment, e.g. capital building costs
- Projects where funding has been withdrawn by other organisations
- Core Services to statutory agencies
- Applications from individuals
- Local authorities' costs
- Commercial ventures
- National charities
- Equipment purchases over £1,000
- Core costs of running your organisation other than those directly associated with delivery of the project
- Any costs not directly associated with the running of this project
- Any costs that have been incurred (invoiced or payment made from your bank account) before the start date on your contract if your application is successful – i.e. we are unable to support costs you have already incurred.
- Any costs incurred after the end date shown on your grant agreement
- Any costs that cannot be fully evidenced back to your organisation's nominated project bank account or that do not meet the evidence requirements, e.g. invoices not made out to your organisation or cash payments not previously agreed
- Any bank charges or legal fees
- Items which only benefit individuals; for example bursaries, prizes or individual kit and equipment that is not shared
- Activities promoting religious beliefs or political activities
- Activities that the State has a legal obligation to provide e.g. education
- Fundraising activities for your organisation or any other group or activity
- Contingency costs

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list and if you have any queries about eligible costs please contact us for further information.

## **10. How are Community Grants paid?**

Community grants will be paid in instalments.

A first instalment of 25% the grant will be paid after a grant award has been approved and when all participants (or at least the first cohort of participants) have an initial Learning & Assessment Plan and an Individual Learning Record in place (templates and advice on these will be provided).

For shorter projects of three months (90 days) or less, the remainder of the grant will be paid on completion of the project. Evidence of project delivery and outcomes will need to be provided.

For projects running longer than 90 days, an instalment plan will need to be agreed and in place. Project activities up to 31<sup>st</sup> July can be supported. The last date for 'participant starts' on a project is December 2020.

## **11. How to Apply for a Community Grant**

LIFT Community Grants is managed by the LIFT funding Team at Norfolk County Council who have a contract to distribute the grants across Norfolk and Suffolk.

There is a two-stage application process so that you can propose your project idea before committing to the work of a full application.

### **Expression of Interest (EOI) stage**

The EOI is a short form for potential applicants to provide an outline of their project idea who the project is aimed at and what will be achieved. Also the sorts of costs and estimated budget.

Your EOI can be submitted at any time but there will be a deadline for EOIs for each of the 11 funding rounds. Once received there will be a check that the project idea is eligible in principle. If it is then you will be invited to submit a full application

We will share your EOI with members of the relevant LIFT decision making-board for some initial constructive feedback. We know that applicants find this feedback helpful before going on to develop their project idea and complete the full application forms

### **Full Application Stage**

At Full Application you will be expected to provide significantly more information about your project, how it will be delivered and how you will engage and support your participants on the learning and to progress on from your project into other support, other learning or into employment.

You will need to develop and submit a budget and timetable that is as accurate as possible on the spreadsheet provided.

We will also ask you to describe how your project could make a positive impact (as appropriate and proportional to your project) to support the European Social Fund's two 'Horizontal Principles' of Equality & Diversity and Sustainable Development.

Guidance on how to complete a Full Application will be supplied and advice from the LIFT team is offered

### **Funding Rounds**

Unless all the Community Grants funding is committed to projects before October 2021. there will be up to 11 Rounds of funding between July 2019 and October 2021

Each Round will have an Expression of Interest deadline, a Full Application deadline and a decision-making Board meeting in both Norfolk & Suffolk.



## **Help with application process**

The LIFT Team has Facilitators whose roles are to promote the fund and support applicants through the process – you can contact the team by calling 01603 223179 or by emailing [lift@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:lift@norfolk.gov.uk) .

They can help if you have any questions or need support to ensure that your project idea will be eligible, and that you are describing the project activities, target participants and its benefits clearly.

## **12. The final decision on your application**

The Final decision on your application will be made at our either our Suffolk or Norfolk LIFT Board.

The Boards are supported by the LIFT Team and are local community and business representatives as well as people with an understanding of employability support and/or leaning and skills provision. They will have access to your full application and an appraisal of your project prepared by the LIFT Team.

Both the Boards will meet approximately every 4-6 weeks to consider applications.

The Boards have the choice to approve a grant in full OR approve on condition(s) that will be communicated to your OR not approve a grant.

## **13. Grant awards and contracting**

If you are awarded a Community Grant, a grant agreement (contract) will be produced for you to sign.

If you need to raise additional funding for your project from other sources, then you will need to secure those funds before the grant agreement can be put in place.

You should not start the project, or incur costs on the project until you have signed the grant agreement and you have had a visit from a member of the LIFT Team who will support you to set up the systems and paperwork to ensure you are capturing evidence of participant eligibility, individual learner records, initial assessments and learning plans (see below)

## **Post - Grant Award**

### **14. Individual Learning Records**

Individual Learning Records (ILRs) will need to be maintained for each participant in your project which will comprise the following: (templates will be provided)

- Evidence that participants are eligible for funding from the Community Grants Programme (the eligibility criteria are that the participant is legally resident in the UK, able to take paid employment in a European Member State, aged 16 years or older, and that activity take place in Norfolk or Suffolk).
- Evidence to support a robust initial assessment, including Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) has taken place and outcome to be recorded on an Individual Learning Plan (ILP).
- Evidence that an induction has taken place and it includes a narrative outlining the contribution from ESF.
- ILR or enrolment form to cover all details required in the ILR specification, Evidence that an ILP is in place which details all learning activities, outcome of initial assessment etc.
- Where relevant, evidence confirming registration of each awarding body where accredited learning is being delivered.
- Evidence of attendance records and progress reviews which should take place at regular intervals

## **15: Initial Assessment and Individual Learning Plan**

Template documents for the Initial Assessment and Individual Learning Plan (ILP) will be provided to the successful applicants to use or amend where appropriate.

The Initial Assessment and Individual Learning Plan is communication between the individual and organisation. The purpose of initial assessment is to ascertain the learner's suitability for the programme and their exact starting point and development needs. Therefore, initial assessment must help shape the programme going forward and inform the ILP. Initial assessment must therefore determine, as a minimum:

- The objectives of the learner and of the programme
- The learner's current abilities, attitudes and aptitudes
- Support and development needs
- The most appropriate teaching and learning styles and methodologies
- Set a realist expected end date for the aims.

The Initial Assessment will identify where the individual's skills or experience is against certain questions and categories, so individuals can be monitored and evaluated both at the beginning and end of the programme, this will assist to record and show the distance the individual has travelled.

An Individual Learning Plan (ILP) must be produced for each learner. The ILP is a result of the initial assessment and must contain the details of what will be delivered; how it will be delivered (for example, by group work, workbook and so on); and the way it will be delivered in the light of the learner's learning styles and abilities. It must reflect the outcomes of the initial assessment. It must contain the

learning objectives of the programme that learners are following, and state how these will be achieved. The learner must be given a copy of the ILP at the start of learning. The learner must sign the ILP.

The ILP must be signed and dated by the individual AND the person in your organisation who is most appropriate to do so.

## 16. Evidence, Monitoring & Evaluation

In addition to the Individual Learning Record (ILR) and Individual Learning Assessment and Plans (ILP) described in Section 15 above we will expect your project to report on a regular basis the following monitoring information.

- Number of participants supported to engage with the project
- Learning aims achieved
- Soft outcomes achieved by the participants such as
  - increasing confidence or
  - removing barriers to employment
- Progression into further learning/education
- Progression into employment

Templates for reporting will be provided.

ESF monitoring requirements are stringent, and failure to adhere to them will result in grant instalments being withheld.

## 17. Horizontal Principles of ESF & other policies implementation

In addition to the objectives of the European Social Fund to equip people with the skills for meaningful employment, the ESF also seeks to ensure its funding is used in such a way that promotes and enables **Equal Opportunity and Diversity** for those who will benefit from funded projects. Also that ESF funded projects are actively considering the concept of **Sustainable Development** and will identify and take reasonable actions to reduce adverse environmental impact.

These are known as the 'horizontal principles' and run as a thread through all ESF funding programmes and be reflected in all funded activity.

### **Equal Opportunities and Diversity - minimum actions for Community Grants Projects:**

**17.1. Equality Policy and Implementation Plan:** The project/ learning provider will be required to have an Equality policy and must produce a project specific equality implementation/ action plan. The implementation plan will set out how the project is going to turn its equality commitment into action.

**17.2. Integrating Equality into the Project Selection Process** – Projects will be required to include within their Full Application how they plan to address and support equality, diversity and inclusion within their project.

**17.3. Disabled Access-** Projects will be encouraged to use accessible premises/ facilities whenever possible to allow for disabled access.

**17.4. Access to project Material** - It will be ensured that programme material can be made in available in accessible formats. Project policies, procedures and learning materials will not discriminate against any individuals or groups.

**17.5. Promoting Disclosure of Disability** – The project/ learning provider will be required to promote the disclosure of disability in a positive way. The project/learning provider will make clear the benefits of disclosing disability and the support that will be made available to the participant upon disclosure.

**17.6. Anti-harassment/ Anti-bullying Policy**– The project/ learning provider will be required to make all participants aware of the aims of the Anti-harassment/ Antibullying Policy in place as part of their induction into the project.

Projects must ensure that induction sessions with learners include discussions and agreement around conduct, rights and respect for others.

All learners enrolled in a Community Grant project are responsible for conducting themselves in a manner in line with the conduct expectations relayed to them at their project induction. They are expected to proactively prevent all forms of discrimination and bullying and show a respect for the ideas and views of others.

**17.7. Equality and Diversity Contact**– project participants must be made aware of a named individual that they will be able to air equality grievances to.

**17.8.** If you are awarded a Community Grant there will be a section on your progress report template to report what actions you have taken and what you have achieved.

## **Sustainable Development – minimum actions for Community Grants funded projects**

**17.9** At application stage you will be expected to create a basic plan and set yourselves achievable targets to take actions that will:

- (a) Minimise waste
- (b) Minimise energy consumption
- (c) Minimise use of travel and promote use of public or green transport where travel is unavoidable.

You will also need to confirm that your waste is disposed of by an authorised waste disposal company and that you dispose of any electrical/electronic equipment separately from general waste.

**17.10** If you are awarded a Community Grant there will be a section on your progress report template to report what actions you have taken and what you have achieved.

### **17.11 Safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults**

Projects who will be supporting young people or adults who are vulnerable will be required to submit evidence/describe their procedures for keeping participants safe from harm, abuse, exploitation and radicalisation

### **17.12 Health and Safety**

Health and Safety equipment and measures must be in place and The induction of project participants must include how health and safety will be assured on the project and what their role is on these matters.

### **17.13 Loneliness and isolation**

For both Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils tackling loneliness and isolation is a key aim for our communities. We will encourage funded projects to tell us if their projects are enabling otherwise isolated people to meet and interact with others, bringing members of a community to work alongside each other for a common purpose

### **17.14 Anti-fraud, Bribery and Corruption and Whistleblowing**

We will provide you with information and a link to share with your staff, volunteers and learners and others so that they are aware of how they can report their concerns as regards Anti-fraud Bribery and Corruption.

## **18: Data Protection, Information Security. Records Management and Retention,**

Funded projects are expected to comply with current Data Protection (GDPR) legislation and to have processes and measures in place to ensure that data and information records related to the project are kept secure but accessible when required for reporting/evidence.

At the end of the project your records should be stored securely and retained until December 2030 and labelled as such. If your organisation closes down or is wound up before that date then the records should be sent/delivered to the LIFT Team (or to the Norfolk County Council Economic Development Team if LIFT team no longer exists).