



THIRD SECTOR
Dumfries and Galloway

Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund for Adults

**Dumfries and Galloway
Applicant Guidance
September 2026**

Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund for Adults

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Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund

1. Background

- 1.1 The Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund for Adults (the Fund) was established in October 2021 and to date has distributed around £99 million to community initiatives supporting mental health and wellbeing across Scotland. Funding of £15 million for a sixth year was announced in March 2026, with guidance released by Scottish Government in June 2026.
- 1.2 In 2025, the Scottish Government announced a [Fairer Funding pilot](#) as part of its commitment to deliver fairer funding for the third sector. The pilot provided an opportunity to offer multi-year grant awards. Approximately 70% of the Round 5 allocation was awarded to two-year projects, meaning a significant proportion of this year's allocation will be used to fund the second year of these projects.
- 1.3 The Fund has a strong focus on prevention and early intervention and aims to support grass roots community groups in tackling mental health inequalities and address priority issues of social isolation and loneliness, suicide prevention and tackling poverty and inequality. There will be continued emphasis in Years 6 on responding to the cost-of-living crisis and on those facing socio-economic disadvantage.
- 1.4 In Dumfries and Galloway, the fund will be distributed by Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway (TSDG) to community groups and organisations. The total funding available for groups in Dumfries and Galloway in 2026/2027 is £445,868.37 with the £299,627.41 reserved for the second year of the two year funded projects.
- 1.5 This document outlines in more detail what the Fund is about, how it will be delivered, who can apply and how to do this.

2. Fund Aim and Priorities

2.1 Fund Aim

- 2.1.1 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, it aims to:

- Tackle **mental health inequalities** through supporting a range of 'at risk groups (as outlined in the Equalities section).
- 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.
- Support **small 'grass roots' community groups** and organisations to deliver such activities.
- Provide **opportunities for people to connect** with each other, build trusted relationships and revitalise communities.

- 2.1.2 The Fund directly contributes to Outcome 4 of the [Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#) published in June 2023: "better equipped communities to support people's mental health and wellbeing and provide opportunities to connect with others".

It also clearly supports the three key areas of focus in 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.

2.1.3 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.

Specifically, the intended outcomes of the Fund remain the same as in Years 1 - 5, and 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 invest 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.

2.2 Fund Priorities

2.2.1 The following priorities for the Fund in Dumfries and Galloway are based on the existing strategic context at national and regional levels:

- **Social isolation and loneliness.**
- **Suicide prevention.**
- **Poverty and inequality with a particular emphasis on responding to the cost-of-living crisis and support to those facing socio-economic disadvantages.**

2.2.2 Each application will be required to show how it contributes to at least one of these priorities.

2.3 Equalities considerations and at-risk groups

2.3.1 The Fund welcomes applications which demonstrate a focus on 'at risk' groups:

- Women (particularly young women, and women and young women affected by male sexual 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.
- 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 50 and above).
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) communities.
- People with neurological conditions or learning disabilities, and from neurodiverse communities.
- Young people aged 16-24.

- 2.3.2 Although it is not a requirement for eligibility, each application will be asked to show which ‘at risk’ group(s) will benefit from the project. Applications will still be considered for beneficiaries who are not included in the above list.
- 2.3.3 Applicants will be asked to confirm if your project is *Open to all* (general), *Targeted* (targeting a specific risk group), *Restricted* (only open to at risk group). Applicants must be able to demonstrate how projects are accessible and any barriers to engage have been identified and removed.
- 2.3.4 Applicants will also be asked to confirm if the project will support any of Scottish Government’s cost-of-living priority groups:
- Lone parents
 - Families with a disabled family member
 - Families with 3+ children
 - Minority ethnic families
 - Families where youngest child is under 1 year old
 - Mothers aged less than 25

3. Fund Criteria

3.1 Who can apply?

- 3.1.1 The ambition of this fund is to support initiatives which promote mental health and wellbeing at a small scale, grass roots, community level to those aged 16 and over. It is accessible to all groups, and it can support both new and existing groups or projects. Funded organisations do not need to have mental health and wellbeing as their sole focus, but, as this is the purpose of this Fund, their application does have to clearly outline how it benefits the mental health and wellbeing of people in their community.
- 3.1.2 Applications can be accepted from a range of third sector organisations:
- Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisations (SCIO)
 - Constituted Groups
 - Registered Charities
 - Companies Limited by Guarantee
 - Trusts
 - Not-for-profit company or asset locked company or Community Interest Companies (CIC)
 - Cooperatives
 - Community Benefit Societies
 - Community Councils
 - Parent Councils
- Please note that Parent Councils are eligible to apply, subject to the following conditions:
The funded activities must meet the aims of the Fund and specifically must focus 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.
- 3.1.3 TSDG can also consider funding unconstituted groups, either by supporting them to become constituted, or allowing a constituted entity (that meets criteria above) to hold a grant for the unconstituted group. TSDG as grant giver would require to be satisfied with arrangements around monitoring and accountability of spend. Please contact the team by emailing wellbeingfund@tsdg.org.uk for further

advice and support.

- 3.1.4 Funding can only be applied for if the applicant organisation has an annual income of no more than £1million. If an applicant organisation is part of a national organisation, this amount would refer to the income specifically for Dumfries and Galloway.
- 3.1.5 Fair Work First is the Scottish Government's flagship policy for driving high quality and fair work and workforce diversity across the labour market in Scotland. Their Fair Work First Guidance, updated on 18 November 2024, explains their Fair Work First approach, provides good practice examples to guide employers' approaches and, importantly, explains the benefits of fair work for workers and organisations. It is designed to encourage and support employers to adopt fair work practices within their organisation, focusing on the Fair Work First criteria.
- 3.1.6 Through Fair Work First the Scottish Government is asking employers in receipt of public sector grant funding to adopt the following criteria:

Mandatory:

- Payment of at least the real Living Wage.
- Provide appropriate channels for effective workers' voice, such as trade union recognition.

Desirable:

- Investment in workforce development.
- No inappropriate use of zero hours contracts.
- Address workplace inequalities, including pay and employment gaps for disabled people, racialised minorities, women and workers aged over 50.
- Offer flexible and family friendly working practices for all workers from day one of employment.
- Oppose the use of fire and rehire practice

The mandatory criteria are the minimum standard required for a grant award, and grant applicants should also confirm that they are committed to working towards the five remaining desirable criteria.

- 3.1.7 With regards to the real Living Wage, the guidance notes that: The real Living Wage conditions requires that the following groups of workers who are 16 and over, including apprentices, are paid at least the real Living Wage:
- All staff who are directly employed by the grant recipient and work in Scotland.
 - All staff who are directly employed by the grant recipient and directly engaged in delivering the funded activity but based elsewhere in the UK.
 - All workers (in a third party organisation) not directly employed by the grant recipient who are directly engaged in delivering the funded activity and based anywhere in the UK.
- 3.1.8 It should be noted that fair work guidance around effective workers' voice does not apply to the funded projects.

3.2 What type of projects can the Fund support?

- 3.2.1 The ambition of this Fund is to support initiatives which promote mental health and wellbeing at a small scale, grass roots, community level; activities must be accessible. National organisations undertaking initiatives in Dumfries and Galloway are not excluded but are not the main focus of the Fund. Funded organisations do not need to have mental health and wellbeing as their sole focus, but, as this is the purpose of this Fund, their application does have to clearly outline how it benefits the mental health and wellbeing of people in their community.

3.2.2 The Fund will support new and existing projects. Applications should state when the funded activity is due to start. This should be no earlier than 01 April 2027. One-year projects can be funded for a maximum of 12 months with all work completed by 31 March 2027. Organisations in receipt of multi-year funding are not eligible to apply for Round 6 of the fund.

3.2.3 Applications are limited to one per organisation.

3.2.4 The Fund will only support projects whose beneficiaries live in Dumfries and Galloway.

3.3 What can we fund?

3.3.1 We will fund the following:

- One-off events (one-year projects only)
- Hall hire for community spaces.
- Staff costs (these should be one-off or fixed term)
- Training costs
- Transport
- Utilities/running costs
- Volunteer expenses
- Small capital spend up to £5,000

Applicants can request funding for capital expenditure such as the construction, refurbishment and/or purchase of buildings, amenities or vehicles. The benefits of the capital expenditure must demonstrably contribute to the Fund outcomes. This limitation does not apply to the purchase of small items of equipment.

3.3.2 We cannot fund the following:

- Contingency costs, loans, endowments, or interest
- Electricity generation and feed-in tariff payment
- Political or religious campaigning
- Profit-making/fundraising activities
- VAT you can reclaim
- Statutory activities
- Overseas travel
- Alcohol

3.3.3 The purpose of the Fund is not primarily directed toward providing clinical interventions, but if any proposals do involve potential for clinically trained staff delivering therapeutic intervention there should be clear arrangements in place for clinical supervision and governance.

3.4 How much can organisations apply for?

3.4.1 The total value of the grant programme for Round 6 is £445,868.37, of this total £146,240.96 is available for new applications for projects in Dumfries and Galloway.

3.4.2 As part of the Fairer Funding pilot, organisations were able to apply for funding for two-year projects in 2025. This means that £299,627.41 from this year's grant has been set aside to fund the second year of multi-year projects. All two-year projects will undergo an interim evaluation to ensure the project merits receiving the second year of funding.

3.4.3 In order to support the Scottish Government's ambition of reaching small community organisations, the multi-agency, multi-sector Steering Group has agreed that the remaining grant funding should be allocated to applications up to a maximum value of £10,000.

3.4.4 Round 6 Grant Programme

Yr 6 Grant Programme	£445,868.37
Funding reserved for second year of multi-year projects	£299,627.41
Funding for new one-year application up to £10,000	£146,240.96

3.4.6 Organisations which received two-year funding in Round 5 will not be able to apply for Round 6 one-year funding.

3.4.7 If any project, which received a 2-year grant offer, does not meet the criteria for the second year of funding, this award will be reallocated to fund Round 6 one-year project(s).

3.4.7 Round 6 projects can last a maximum of 12 months.

3.5 How will we strike a balance?

3.5.1 The Fund steering group has agreed it will maintain an overview of applications to strike a balance in relation to:

- Geographical spread
- Categories of activities funded
- Grant amounts
- Diversity of eligible applicants
- Range of beneficiaries

3.6 When can organisations apply?

3.6.1 The local application process will be live at 10.00am Monday 14 September 2026. There will be an open call for applications with a closing date of 12 noon on Wednesday 21 October 2026.

3.6.2 The applications will be screened by TSDG for eligibility and fit with the Fund outcomes. An independent scoring panel will assess all applications.

3.6.3 The scoring panel will meet early December to make decisions on the allocation of funding.

3.6.4 Applicants can expect to be notified of the outcome of their application by the end of January 2027.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The Fund will be delivered through a locally focused and co-ordinated approach based on the following roles and responsibilities:

4.1.1 A Dumfries and Galloway local partnership has been established for the Fund, consisting of a multi-agency, multi sector steering group and independent scoring panel.

4.1.2 The steering group is responsible for agreeing the overall strategic approach to the administration of the Fund.

4.1.3 The scoring panel is responsible for assessing applications and draws on people with knowledge

of and expertise in the communities of Dumfries and Galloway, the role of the third sector and where relevant the various categories of project activity (such as sport, culture, mental health, heritage, green environment).

4.1.4 TSDG's role is to:

- Establish and oversee the application process.
- Promote the Fund.
- Assess applications for eligibility and suitability.
- Provide secretariat to the steering group.
- Chair and administer the scoring panel.
- Issue grant offer letters and payments.
- Gather monitoring information for reporting.

4.2 TSDG does not have any decision-making powers in relation to allocation of funds.

4.3 People with lived-experience will be involved from an early stage and in ongoing planning and decision making.

4.4 Community Planning locality hubs will, when required, have a role in advising on technical aspects of applications. These are multi-agency groups based in each of the four localities in the region, with an understanding of the communities they support.

5. Application and Monitoring Processes

5.1 The application form is based on the guidance provided by the Scottish Government and the outcomes proposed in this plan. The form has been designed to gather information that will be used in the monitoring activities described below. The application form is attached as appendix two. An online version of the application form will be available on the TSDG website, and all applicants will be encouraged to apply online. A paper version will be available on request.

5.2 Successful applicants will be asked to adhere to all monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements in the grant offer letter. These are identified as follows:

- Submission of interim progress reports including spend to date.
- Completion of end of grant evaluation report detailing outputs and outcomes achieved along with confirmation of spend and impact.
- Respond to any request for information from TSDG at any time.
- Provide information when requested to contribute to overall fund evaluation.
- Projects must sign up to ALISS and signpost on other directories where relevant.

5.3 Should additional guidance be received from the Scottish Government on monitoring and evaluation, guidance to applicants will be amended and communicated as required.

6. Grant Application Form Guidance

There is one funding profile in Round 6 – small grants up to £10,000 and lasting no more than 12 months.

Section 1

This section asks for the contact details for your organisation. You will also need to provide details for the main and secondary contacts within your organisation who we can communicate with about your application.

Section 2

This section asks for detail about your organisation. You will need to tell us when your organisation was established and what type of organisation you are. We would like to know how many staff and volunteers you have along with a brief description outlining the main activities and services you provide and to whom.

Section 3

This section is looking for some financial details. You will need to tell us about your income for the last financial year along with the contact details for the independent examiner who signed your accounts. You will also need to provide your bank account name, sort code and account number. If your bank account name does not match your organisation name, we may deem you ineligible. We have provided a text box for you to explain why these names do not match. Cases will be assessed on an individual basis.

To be eligible to apply for this Fund, annual income must be no more than £1million. If you are part of a national organisation, this amount would refer to the income specifically for Dumfries and Galloway.

Section 4

This section is looking for details about the project that you are asking for funding for. You will need to include the following:

- Project name.
- Project / funding start and end date (eligible dates 01.04.2027 - 31.03.2028).
- Postcode areas the project will cover.
- Number of beneficiaries the project will support, and how you have calculated this figure.
- Which at risk groups the project will support.
- Who the project is open to.
- If it is a new or existing project and if the project has received a grant from this fund before.
- Type of project.
- If the project targets the 'cost-of-living priority groups'.
- How many volunteers are involved in the delivery of the project.
- If applications for this fund have been submitted to other TSI areas.

In this section you will need to tell us about the project and the activities you would like to deliver (500 words max).

You will need to tell us how you know this project is needed (500 words max).

You also need to tell us about the difference this project will make to its beneficiaries (500 words max).

You will need to identify which of the fund priorities your project will address:

- Social Isolation and Loneliness.
- Suicide Prevention.
- Poverty and Inequality.

Only choose those priorities you directly address. Those priorities chosen, will be the basis for how your project is evaluated.

You will need to explain how your project will address each priority chosen (300 words max per priority).

You will need to describe how you will measure and evaluate your project's impact (500 words max).

Section 5

This section is for the project budget. You will need to tell us the total cost of the project and how much funding you are applying for.

If you are not applying for 100% of the total project cost, you must tell us where else your project funding is coming from.

You are also required to provide us with a budget breakdown that matches the amount you requested and not the total project costs. Please note that you can group some expenditure into a single budget line, utilities for example. However, if requested you should be able to provide details on how you have calculated that figure. There is a requirement for all grant recipients awarded a public sector grant on or after 1 July 2023 to pay at least the Real Living Wage and provide appropriate channels for effective workers' voice, subject to limits on devolved competence. Further information can be found [here](#). You will need to confirm that you will adhere to the guidance as described in 3.1.5 and 3.1.6.

If you are applying for capital costs, you are required to tell us about your exit strategy for this project.

Section 6

In this section you will need to confirm that you have the appropriate policies and procedures in place to deliver this project.

- You will need to confirm that your organisation has a safeguarding policy if your core work, or the project you are applying for involved children or vulnerable adults.
- You will need to confirm that your organisation has an EDI policy.
- You will need to confirm that you will pay the Real Living Wage as per guidance on Fair Work principles.
- You will need to confirm that if your grant request is for any item(s) costing more than £3,000 you will obtain at least two quotes for each of those items.
- You need to upload your constitution or governing document and a copy of a recent bank statement with your bank name, account name, sort code and account number. If you do not have the bank statement available electronically, please submit the application and email it as soon as possible to wellbeingfund@tsdg.org.uk.

All your documents must be received within 5 days of submitting your application or by the application deadline, whichever is sooner.

Please note that your application may not be processed for assessment until all the required documents, listed above, have been received.

Section 7

In this section you will need to declare that the information contained in this application is correct, that the constitution (or other governing document) submitted with the application is the most up-to-date version adopted by the members of the above organisation, and that you are authorised to make the application on behalf of the above organisation and with whom it has been discussed.

You will accept that decisions made by the scoring panel are final.

Finally, you will sign your name and insert the date. This can be an auto signature or in standard font. You accept that by submitting your application, you agree to allow Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway to retain your personal data on its database to process your application. We will use the information you give us to help assess your application and administer any grant we award you. We may also publish this information on our website or use it to analyse our grant making for our own research or for others. We may give copies of this information to individuals and organisations we consult when assessing applications, when monitoring grants and evaluating our programmes. This is in line with our Privacy Notice which you can read at <https://www.tsdg.org.uk/privacy-policy/>