

Spring Engagement Grants Fund – Frequently Asked Questions

Applying for funding

Can organisations apply for multiple funds?

Yes, you can apply for multiple funds. You will have to complete separate applications for each.

In your application, you'll need to show that you have the capacity to collect feedback and share what you've heard. You may also be invited to join a 45-minute telephone conversation with your CVS project lead.

Can we apply for less than £550?

Yes, £550 is the maximum amount available, but there's no minimum.

Can we apply if our organisation works across multiple boroughs?

Yes, but you must be able to demonstrate which communities you will reach as part of your engagement. We'd ask you to identify areas your organisation can reach the communities that visit your organisation. It's important to be as detailed as possible in your application as part of the funding is aimed at reaching the communities outlined in the criteria such as those in deprived areas. Please provide clear information on how you plan to reach these communities through your events/activities or conversations.

Can organisations apply if they are already receiving funding from another source?

Yes, you can still apply even if you're receiving funding from another source. However, you'll need to show how this grant will be used separately and ensure there's no duplication of funding for the same activity. If you have any concerns, please speak with your CVS project lead.

Can we apply if we're not a registered charity?

This is a fund for community and voluntary sector organisations, if you want to check if this fund is applicable to you, please contact your local CVS project lead. If you are ineligible, you could partner up with a community and voluntary organisation.

What happens if I only have a personal bank account?

We ask that you have a bank account in the name of your organisation. Please talk to your CVS project lead if you are unsure.

I want to apply for the oral health grant but my organisation isn't based in Merton or Wandsworth, can I still apply?

Yes, you can apply if you can demonstrate that at least 70% of the people you support live in Merton or Wandsworth. You will need to provide evidence of this in your application. Unfortunately, we cannot accept applications from organisations that do not meet this criteria.

I received funding last year—can I apply again?

Yes, we encourage you to apply again.

I didn't submit a feedback form last year—can I apply this time?

Unfortunately, no. Completing the feedback form was a condition of the previous grant. If you'd like to discuss this, please contact your CVS project lead.

Do we need to meet any specific criteria to qualify for funding?

Yes, you need to have safeguarding policies, insurance, and DBS checks (if relevant for the communities you support) in place. You must also commit to providing a report on what your community has shared with you. You may also be invited to a follow-up conversation with your CVS lead.

Using the funding

Can the funds be used for ongoing costs or just one-off events?

You can decide how to use the funding—it could support multiple events, enhance an existing event, or cover your time spent gathering and reporting feedback.

Can the funds be used for staffing, or just materials and resources?

Yes, staffing costs can be included—just make sure they are clearly detailed in your application.

Can funding be used to cover volunteer expenses?

Yes, you can use the funding to cover reasonable volunteer expenses, such as travel or refreshments, if it supports engagement and collecting feedback. Please make sure to include this in your budget breakdown.

Can the funds be used for catering or event logistics?

Yes—please include these costs in your application.

Can the same activity be funded multiple times?

Yes, if you received funding for a similar activity before, you could apply again. However, we encourage organisations to build on their previous work and demonstrate how they will engage their communities in new or more in-depth ways

Delivering the project

Do groups need to run events?

Not necessarily. The key aim is to gather and record the feedback you hear and share this feedback. You might use the funding to boost an existing event or to offer small incentives for one-to-one conversations. It's up to you how you do it. Please provide this detail in your application form.

Is there a limit on how many people we can invite to an event?

No, this is entirely up to your organisation.

What should we include in our breakdown of costs?

Please include everything you need to run your activity and gather feedback. Think about costs like printing, materials, and staffing.

Will you be providing leaflets and translations?

We will provide leaflets on vaccinations and mental health, and we'll translate them where possible. However, we won't be printing or delivering them, so please budget for printing costs.

Will the NHS be providing clinicians?

No, NHS clinicians will not be attending events. Our clinical team is small, and capacity is limited. If you feel a clinician is essential, please contact your local CVS Project Lead. Attendance cannot be guaranteed.

Will the NHS or CVS project lead attend our events?

Your NHS engagement lead or CVS project lead will be in touch in advance if they'd like to visit, but this is not a condition of the grant.

What happens if a group can't complete their project?

We understand that unexpected challenges can arise. If you're unable to complete your activity as planned, please contact your CVS project lead as soon as possible to discuss your options. Depending on the circumstances, we may be able to offer flexibility or alternative ways to meet the grant objectives.

Can we change our approach after funding is awarded?

Yes, we understand that things don't always go exactly to plan. If you need to adapt your approach, please let your CVS project lead know as soon as possible. We want to be flexible and support you to engage your community in the best way possible.

Is there flexibility if our event costs more than expected?

The maximum funding available is £550. If your costs go over this, your organisation will need to cover the extra expenses.

Reporting & evaluation

If I'm invited to a telephone conversation, what will this involve?

The telephone conversation will be an informal one-to-one chat with your CVS project lead. They may ask you for some more details about the information you have put your feedback form or what else you might have heard from your local community. This can be arranged at a time that suits you both.

Do we need to provide evidence on how we used the funds?

Yes, we need a clear budget breakdown in your application. Successful applicants will also need to complete a feedback form, which includes a question about how the funding will be used.

What's the expected timeline for using the funding?

We expect activities to start in early April. All events must be completed by end of May and forms should be sent to your CVS project lead by mid-June. If you feel you cannot meet these deadlines, please contact your CVS project lead.

Are there any reporting deadlines beyond the final report?

The main reporting deadline is mid June when final feedback should be submitted. We may check in with you before then to see how your engagement is going, but there are no formal interim reports required.

What type of insight are you looking for?

We're interested in hearing about people's experiences with health and care services, as well as their views on staying healthy. You can focus on the issues most relevant to your community, but some key areas of interest include the following and we will provide some question prompts to help you have these conversations:

- Digital health and online services
- Preventative health, including vaccinations
- Mental health and wellbeing

How will the insight be used?

The feedback you gather will help shape local health services by giving decision-makers a

better understanding of community needs. Your insights will be shared with the NHS and other partners to influence future services, funding priorities, and community support.

Will there be support available for evaluation and reporting?

Yes, we'll provide a training session on capturing and reporting community feedback. If you need further support, your CVS project lead will be happy to help.

Next steps & payments

What happens after applications close?

Applications close on 12 March, 5pm. They will be reviewed by a panel, including the CVS project lead, NHS engagement lead, and possibly another team member. Decisions will then be shared with the SWL Executive Director of Stakeholder Engagement and Communications. Once confirmed, your CVS project lead will contact you with the outcome and next steps. If successful, they'll let you know what's needed to process payment.

When will we hear the outcome?

We expect to notify successful applicants by early April.

How will payments be made?

Payments will be made after your application has been approved. Your CVS project lead will confirm the details, including what's needed to raise an invoice and ensure you receive payment promptly. If you have any questions about this process, please get in touch.

What happens if we gather more feedback than expected?

That's great! If you collect more insight than planned, you are welcome to submit it. We're keen to hear as much as possible about people's experiences. Just make sure your final insight form captures the key themes from what people have told you and learning in a way that's clear and manageable.

If I'm not successful, will you share details of how to improve?

Yes, of course. Your CVS project lead can share feedback and top tips for the future.

What should I do if someone raises an issue that requires intervention or safeguarding?

If you receive a concern or disclosure that requires intervention or safeguarding, it is essential to take immediate action. Please follow your organisation's safeguarding procedures, which should include reporting the issue to the designated safeguarding lead. If you are unsure of the next steps, contact your local CVS project lead or the relevant support services. Ensuring the safety and well-being of individuals is our top priority, and we encourage you to take appropriate action promptly. We will provide information at our training session to support services.