



Learning Disability Support Fund

Fund Information and Guidance Notes

Application deadline:
12pm (midday) Wednesday 26 February 2025



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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INSPIRING SCOTLAND

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About this fund

The Learning Disability Support Fund aims to sustain and support organisations working directly with people with learning disabilities in Scotland to build a more inclusive society, reduce inequality and provide opportunities for fulfilling lives.

The last thirty years have seen enormous changes in how people with learning disabilities are supported in society, however there is more work to be done. The Scottish Government remains committed to building a society where people with learning disabilities are fully included, valued, and supported to achieve their potential and their needs and rights are fully realised. The Learning Disability Support Fund will provide funding to third sector organisations working to promote equality and inclusion for people with learning disabilities in Scotland.

The Learning Disability Support Fund will **run from October 2025 to March 2028 (30 months)** and will provide both core and project funding.

Total funding available is £1,625,000: £325,000 for the first six months October 2025 to March 2026, and £650,000 per year for the following two years. The total minimum award per organisation will be £75,000 over the award period and the total maximum award per organisation will be £250,000.

The deadline for applications is 12pm (midday) on Wednesday 26th February 2025.

If you want help to access the information, please get in touch:

inclusion@inspiringscotland.org.uk

Objectives

The third sector plays a critical role in improving the lives of people with learning disabilities. This funding is aimed at supporting organisations' efforts to create a society where people with learning disabilities can lead fulfilling, independent, and active lives as equal citizens.

People with learning disabilities have shared their priorities in recent consultation and research.¹ This has informed the fund objectives. Funded work will contribute to **at least one** the following objectives:

¹ Primarily [Include for Good](#) - the Rapporteurs 8 Pillars for Change; Accessing Mental Health Support and Services - research involving members of The Assembly; [Consultation response](#) to the Learning Disability, Autism and Neurodivergence Bill; Key messages from the Scottish Learning Disabilities Observatory [This is Me film](#); and Enable Scotland's [Rights Now! report](#).

- **A more inclusive society**

Organisations should provide activities that specifically address stigma, discrimination, bullying and loneliness of people with learning disabilities. Organisations should be working to improve the visibility of people with learning disabilities and focus on the rich contribution people with learning disabilities make in all aspects of life.

- **Improved health outcomes for people with learning disabilities**

Organisations should provide activities that address health inequalities for people with learning disabilities. For example, this might be providing accessible health (including mental health) information for people with learning disabilities or supporting access to health services.

- **People with learning disabilities have a social network and safe relationships**

Organisations should provide activities that offer opportunities for people to develop friendships and a social network. This might include providing education and support around developing relationships.

Successful proposals will demonstrate:

- **Alignment to national policy**, most recently as highlighted in the key themes from the [Learning Disabilities, Autism and Neurodivergence \(LDAN\) Bill consultation](#).
- **Co-design and co-delivery of services**: the involvement of people with learning disabilities, their families, and advocates in designing and delivering services.
- **Meaningful and sustained impact**: people with learning disabilities will benefit from and live better lives because of the organisation's work.
- **The realisation of human rights**: organisational activity should protect people's human rights and align to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).
- **Strong monitoring and evaluation practice**: evidenced experience and ability to monitor and evaluate the impact of the work delivered.
- **Good governance**, robust Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and safeguarding practice, and prudent financial management.

Who can apply

To apply for this funding, you must be a Scottish not-for-profit organisation with a minimum income level of £100,000 and a maximum income of £2 million per annum.

You must be a Scottish not-for-profit organisation

You should be a Scotland-based, not-for-profit, incorporated organisation with a **legal personality**. Please note if you are a registered charity this does not automatically mean you are an incorporated organisation, so please check the legal form of your organisation before applying. Eligible legal forms are shown below.

- Company Limited by Guarantee
- Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Statutory services (e.g., NHS, Local Authorities) are not eligible to apply.

You must have a bank account registered in the name of your organisation. This bank account must require two signatories for withdrawals.

You must have strong experience working with people with learning disabilities

This fund is open to not-for-profit organisations committed to improving the lives of people with learning disabilities, their families and carers. This should be clearly set out in your organisation's governing document (Memorandum and Articles or Constitution).

You can apply for funding if your work supports the transition to adulthood for children with learning disabilities who are over 14 years old. The Fund is not for work related to children under this age.

Your organisation's annual income must be between £100,000 and £2 million

Organisations with annual income levels of between £100,000 and £2 million are eligible. In addition, your request for funding **must** be less than 30% of your reported income. For example, an organisation with an annual income of £100,000 can apply for a maximum of £30,000 per financial year, or a total of £75,000 over the fund period. You will be asked to provide your income for the past three years, as reported in your annual accounts.

What you can spend the money on

How much you can apply for

This funding can be used to cover core and/or project costs for the period from October 2025 to March 2028 (30 months/2.5 years).

- Minimum grant size is £75,000 (£30,000 per financial year).
- Maximum grant size is £250,000 (£100,000 per financial year).
- The amount requested per year must not be more than 30% of your organisation's annual income. You will be asked for your organisation's income for the last three years.

Core costs

Different things are meant by core funding. For the Learning Disability Support Fund, we mean operating and essential running costs. This includes:

- Existing management, administration, and delivery staff including sessional staff
- Staff costs such as travel and training
- Office costs (accommodation and supplies)
- Overheads (heating, lighting, cleaning, insurance)
- Communication and IT costs

Please do not include core costs that are already being met by existing income streams - e.g. through another grant or via membership income.

Project costs

We recognise that delivering a project may require more core resource (e.g. you may have to bring on more staff and/or increase your internal operational capacity). Therefore, we support full cost recovery in project budgeting. This means that your proposed budget can include overhead costs as well as direct project costs. You may find this [introduction to full cost recovery](#) helpful.

Revenue expenditure

The expectation is that applications will be for revenue expenditure: the day-to-day operational costs that come from running your organisation or delivering the project. Requests for small amounts of capital funding to purchase or upgrade physical items essential to delivery of your work will be considered.

Evaluation costs

Because capturing the learning on what worked is so important, you can include costs for resources to help you evaluate your activity. You can include costs that will help to review progress and monitor or map the journey of the project. This could be a contribution towards salary costs for a member of staff to monitor and evaluate the project or it could be reasonable costs towards external evaluation expertise to support you to gather evidence of your work's impact.

Participation costs

We encourage you to consider what costs you need to budget for to ensure that there are no barriers to people participating in the work you do. For a project these might include accessible venue spaces or communications materials, childcare, transport, or refreshments.

How to apply

Accessibility

We want this information and the application process to be accessible to as many people as possible. If there are barriers to you accessing the Learning Disability Support Fund information or application form, please get in touch.

You can contact us by email: inclusion@inspiringscotland.org.uk

Or by telephone: **0131 442 8740**

Guidance notes and fund information

Please use these guidance notes to inform your application. You should ensure that your organisation is eligible to apply and that your work meets the fund objectives.

Expression of interest and application

The standard application process is written and **submitted online**.

[Please submit an Expression of Interest through this link.](#)

Completing the Expression of Interest will give you access to:

- A link to the online application form where you can submit your written application
- A Microsoft Word copy of the application questions, to help you prepare your application
- A budget template
- The Fund Information and Guidance notes
- Easy Read version of these Guidance notes

- Easy Read version of the application form

When you have submitted your application, you will receive a confirmation email. Check your spam folder, and please get in touch with us if you have not received this email after applying.

Full applications must be submitted by 12pm (midday) on Wednesday, 26 February 2025.

Applications received after this time will not be accepted.

Documents you will need

All applications will need to upload the following documents:

- Project or application budget (using the template provided)
- Your organisation's Memorandum and Articles or Constitution
- A copy of your organisation's most recent, signed Statutory Accounts
- Your organisation's Safeguarding policy
- Your organisation's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy

Applications that do not include the documents above will be considered incomplete and will not be considered.

Additional application notes and guidance

Preparing your application

Multiple applications: Given the expected demand on funding, only one application per organisation will be accepted. Please contact us directly to discuss and obtain guidance on situations where you are considering submitting more than one application.

Planning your application

You can use a Microsoft Word copy of the application form to help you plan your answers.

Please note that **we can only accept applications submitted through our online application process unless alternative arrangements have been agreed with us in advance.** If you wish to use the Microsoft Word template to draft your written application, you should copy and paste your answers into the online form to submit your application.

Submitting your online application

Read over the entire application form before answering questions. To save you repeating information, we recommend you read all the questions before starting the form. Please gather the additional information and documents you may need to upload before starting the online form.

Maximum word limits. Please note there are word limits to some questions. These limits are a guide only - the maximum limit does not need to be met. You will be unable to enter more than the maximum word limit. **Keep your answers short and to the point.** A clear and concise response that answers the question fully is much better than a long one.

Formatting. Please note that formatting (including bold text and bullet points) is not captured by our online form so there is no need to spend time on this. Please also note that bullet points add to the word/character count.

What information to include. We expect a high level of interest in this funding. Please consider this when completing your funding request and provide as much detail and clarity as possible. Be specific, make sure your application is clear and answers the question we are asking. We strongly recommend you draft and prepare your answers prior to completing the form online, and you may find it helpful to ask someone in your team to read over your application before you submit it.

What happens after you apply

How we will make decisions

We will take the following into account when assessing applications:

- Does the project support the objectives of the Learning Disability Support Fund?
- Are people with learning disabilities meaningfully involved in your organisation's management and the development and delivery of the work you do?
- Do people with learning disabilities benefit from and live better lives because of your organisation's work?
- Does your organisation promote the realisation of human rights for people with learning disabilities?
- Have you demonstrated a robust approach to monitoring and evaluation?
- Is the budget clear, well thought out and represents value for money?
- Evidence of prudent financial management.
- Evidence of effective and accountable governance.

Successful applicants

- If your application is successful, you will be notified by email. We will let you know when you can publicise the good news.
- Your organisation will be asked to sign a grant agreement and provide us with bank account details and a recent bank statement. We will also ask for details of a finance contact for your organisation who can receive payment remittances and be able to account for how the funding has been spent.
- Once this information has been received, we will pay your grant. Payments will be made in advance and will be spread over the duration of the project.
- You will be asked to report at regular intervals on how you've spent the money and what difference the funding has made.
- You will be expected to attend monthly portfolio/peer support meetings.
- Your assigned Fund Manager will from time to time attend your organisation's Board meetings as an observer.

Timelines

Close for applications	12pm (midday) on February 26th 2025
Decisions to applicants	End April 2025
Beginning of fund activity	October 2025
End of project delivery and final evaluation report	March 2028

How to get more help and advice

If you have any questions when completing your application, you can email:
inclusion@inspiringscotland.org.uk

Video overview

To support organisations preparing applications and to help answer questions you may have, we have prepared a short video overview of the fund aims and application process. You can find this on the [webpage](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

Please check the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on our website for more information you may find helpful. We will continue to add to the FAQs relevant questions and answers as they come up.

Accessibility

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Contact us via an online
Sign Language Interpreter
Contact Scotland BSL

You can also contact us through an online British Sign Language interpreter using [Contact Scotland BSL](#).

You may find the information on the Ability Net website: [mycomputermyway](#) useful in providing help on how to adapt your phone, computer or tablet to meet your needs.

About Inspiring Scotland

Since 2008 Inspiring Scotland has worked towards a Scotland where everyone, no matter where they live, or the circumstances they are born into, is given the chance to enjoy a happy, healthy life free from poverty or disadvantage.

We believe Scotland's voluntary sector has a transformative effect on the lives of those living in Scotland who otherwise may struggle to make the best of their lives due to life circumstances, poverty, or other disadvantages. Our aim is to amplify and strengthen the impact of organisations across civic society by helping them build their strength, resilience, and reach.

We partner with entrepreneurs, businesspeople, philanthropists, charitable trusts, Scottish Government, local authorities and other public bodies to design and implement bold, long-term solutions – drawing on expertise and experience from across disciplines and sectors.

INSPIRING SCOTLAND

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