COMMUNITIES MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING FUND 2026/2027 GUIDANCE

Background

The Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund (Adults) was established in October 2021 to support mental health and wellbeing projects in communities across Scotland. To date £99 million has been distributed to community initiatives supporting mental health in Scotland. Funding for a fifth and sixth year (£15 million each year) was announced in March 2025.

The fund is delivered through a locally focused and co-ordinated approach led by Third Sector Interfaces (TSIs) via local Steering and Partnership Groups. These groups comprise representatives from the Third Sector, Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), NHS, Local Authority, people with lived experience and other relevant stakeholders.

SVE and CTSI will be engaging closely with HSCP representatives to ensure that the fund builds on and enhances local strategic planning for mental health and wellbeing. You can read the HSCP strategic plan here.

The fund has a strong focus on prevention and early intervention and aims 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. The fund enables communities to develop their own solutions and promotes developing stronger partnerships which are reflected in the levels of grants available.

Grassroots community groups and third sector organisations will be able to benefit from the funds which have a strong emphasis on responding to the cost-of-living crisis and those facing socio-economic disadvantage. Community groups and organisations can deliver targeted activities and programmes to re-connect and revitalise communities building on the successes of previous years.

The Scottish Government commissioned an independent evaluation on the delivery and impact of the fund for Year 4, which can be accessed here on the Scottish Government website.

Changes to year 6 funding

In order to make best use of the funds available, SVE and CTSI have agreed to pool together their funding and create one fund that organisations working in Stirling or Clackmannanshire can apply for. **Organisations that provide services in both Clackmannanshire and Stirling are eligible to submit only one application. Separate applications for each area will not be accepted and are not eligible for consideration.**

Grants will be confirmed **before Christmas 2026**. These will be allocated as soon as possible after receipt of the signed Terms and Conditions and must be spent within 12 months from the receipt of funds.

The steering group will consider funding applications from un-constituted groups, either by supporting them to become constituted, or by providing small value grants (for example up to £2,000) for wellbeing support and capacity building purposes. Support for this can be accessed through Tracey Nicholson (SVE) and Brian Weaver (CTSI) see contact information below. **There will only be a small grant fund this year.**

The Steering group also allocate funding through the Ideas Innovation and Improvement Fund (III Fund) and if your application is not shortlisted for the Communities and Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund it will be considered by the panel for the III Fund.

There will be only one level of funding - Up to £4,000

There will be only one stage of applications this year.

If you are in receipt of two-year funding, you are not eligible to apply this year.

Applications open 9th September 2026
Applications Close 7th October 2026 at 5pm

Fund Outcomes

The intended 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 (as outlined under what projects can be funded).
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 such activities.
4. Provide **opportunities for people to connect** with each other, build trusted relationships and revitalise communities.

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

- We are **healthy and active**
- We 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 to 4 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 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.

The Fund also 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; and
- 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.

Who can apply?

This fund supports initiatives that promote mental health and wellbeing at a small scale, grassroots, community level. Funded organisations do not need to have mental health and wellbeing as their sole focus, but their **application has to clearly outline how their proposed project benefits the mental health and wellbeing of people in their community.**

Applications will only be accepted from a range of 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
- Community Groups

This fund is for third sector/community organisations in Stirling and Clackmannanshire. We therefore will check that all applicants:

- are third sector (voluntary) organisations - third sector includes community groups, voluntary organisations, charities or social enterprises or any other not-for-profit groups; these groups will be expected to provide evidence of a government document
- are delivering services in Stirling and/or Clackmannanshire
- **have returned all recording and evaluation paperwork from previous awards**

The fund can support both existing and new projects. **Projects funded through the first 5 years of the fund are eligible to apply again but must clearly show how they will develop and improve in Year 6/7** (for example, in increasing accessibility and reach to different groups and where possible demonstrate impacts of year 1-5). **If you are in receipt of two-year funding, you are not eligible to apply this year.**

We have additional requirements for both applicants and successful grant recipients. We are member organisations and as such, we ask applicants to become a member of SVE/CTSI to ensure they have access to up-to-date information on third sector support and funding (if you are not sure if your organisation is a member of either organisation, please get in touch with your local TSI).

Membership is completely free and links to SVE/CTSI Membership can be found below
SVE's membership form
CTSI's membership form

Organisations who are successful will be required to register with ALISS, if they have not already done so. ALISS is A Local Information System for Scotland, which is a wide directory of services and activities used by GP's and Community Link Workers to signpost individuals. This is an additional way to promote your activities and services to a wider network.

ALISS registration here

What projects can be funded?

The focus of the fund is on the adult population and on projects which help whole communities and/or community groups, in turn making a difference to the lives of the individuals.
The adult population is considered to be those ages 16 and over.

Community organisations, charities, social enterprises, volunteer groups, community councils, already have brilliant ideas about how mental health and wellbeing can be improved. That's why we are welcoming any applications from eligible groups that can demonstrate early intervention/prevention continue to support and promote positive mental health and wellbeing, particularly where the idea has been created with people in that community.

We do have limited funds however and believe in being open around how we will prioritise projects if the fund is oversubscribed.

Based on the needs in the Stirling and Clackmannanshire area we are particularly interested in projects addressing the following:

- Suicide prevention
- Recovery from addiction
- Social Isolation and loneliness
- Support for people with neurodivergence
- Physical Activity, nutrition and diet

We are particularly interested in projects supporting the following groups:

- LGBTQI+ communities
- Gypsy/Traveller communities

We are also interested in projects supporting the following groups:

- Unpaid carers
- People with long term health condition or disability including neurological conditions
- Frailty or mobility issues
- Asylum seekers and refugees
- People with learning disabilities/neurodiversity
- Women particularly women experiencing gender-based violence
- People facing socio-economic disadvantage
- People from a minority ethnic background
- People facing severe and multiple disadvantage

This funding is not intended to be core funding. Where groups or organisations have been funded in the past, we will expect to see a significant building on the previous funding, and new outcomes that will be met as a result of additional funding.

- Equipment – To enable a regular activity and these activities relate to the project outcomes and local needs
- One -off Events
- Hall hire for community spaces
- Staff Costs
- Training Costs
- Transport
- Utilities/running costs
- Volunteer Expenses
- Small capital spend up to £5,000

- Projects aimed at children under 16.
- Any goods or services that you buy or order before we confirm our grant.
- Items that only benefit an individual – for example, scholarships and personal clothing for individuals and equipment that is not shared.
- Routine repair and maintenance costs.
- 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

Fair Work First Requirements

The Scottish Government expects that grant recipients pay the real living wage of £13.45ph to all staff aged 16 and over. Please take this into consideration when budgeting your project costs.

If your organisation is heavily or entirely dependent on grant funding but cannot pay the Real Living Wage, please contact SVE/CTSI prior to submitting your application so we can discuss your proposal, as limited exemptions are available from the Scottish Government.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Successful grant recipients will be expected to monitor and report on how the grant has been spent and the impact that it has had. The panel will examine projects based on their evaluation plans and how they are able to show that they have achieved what they set out to do.

How to apply

Applications go live on the **9th September 2026,** you can apply via our online form by clicking here.

The deadline for applications is on the **7th October 2026 at 5pm**. Please complete all sections of the application form and submit:

- A copy of your governing documents (if you have not applied before)
- A copy of your organisation's most up to date Annual Accounts,
- Your latest bank statement

Those unfamiliar with using an online form may find it beneficial to write responses first and/or save responses in a word document as you go along.

Frequently asked question (FAQ's) are located here

Support

If you have any queries, would like to discuss your proposed project, or would like a PDF version of the form, please contact:

SVE: Tracey Nicholson 01786 430000 traceynicholson@sventerprise.org.uk
CTSI: Brian Weaver 01259 213840 brian.weaver@ctsi.org.uk

Stirlingshire Voluntary Enterprise is registered as a Company Limited by Guarantee SC387876
Registered Scottish Charity Number SC041875

Clackmannanshire Third Sector Interface
Registered Scottish Charity Limited by Guarantee, Charity No: SC042543 Company No: SC396838