

Fulfilling lives: Ageing Better

About Ageing Better

For use in England only



What's it all about?

“If the funding can reach people who are struggling with issues such as loneliness, disability, isolation and bereavement, that would be a wonderful thing.” (Ronald, 77)

Ageing Better is about reducing social isolation for older people to improve their well-being and give them confidence and support so that they can be more active within their neighbourhoods. To do this, we believe older people need a strong voice in the decisions that affect them, and a genuine role in shaping the priorities of their local area. Wider still, we want ageing to be viewed positively as a real asset for communities. This means making sure that the approaches we fund will help to influence the debate on how society supports us all so that we lead more fulfilling lives by ageing better in the future.

For the first time Britain's over-65s now outnumber people under the age of 16 and a quarter of the population will be over 65 by 2032. By 2035, the number of people aged 85 or older is projected to increase by 250 per cent, reaching approximately 3.6 million and constituting 5 per cent of the population. This brings both opportunities and challenges.

We all want to help current and future generations of older people to live the lives they want to lead as they grow older. Older people have much to offer their communities, but more people are living alone today in England than at any other time, with older people much more likely to be vulnerable to social isolation than any other age group.

Social isolation and loneliness can profoundly damage the physical and mental health of those affected by it with far more serious consequences for older people. This then puts pressures and a cost on public services.

The goal is that, as older people become less socially isolated, they will be more active, healthier and happier for longer, with the wider public appreciating better the positive role that older people can play in their communities. In doing this, we aim to establish learning and evidence that will inform future policy and practice so that our funding delivers sustainable improvements to reducing social isolation amongst older people

In order to achieve this, we will fund projects that can meet all five of our funding outcomes:

1. Older people are less isolated.
2. Older people are actively involved in their communities with their views and participation valued more highly.
3. Older people are more engaged in the design and delivery of services that help reduce their isolation.
4. Services that help to reduce isolation are better planned, co-ordinated and delivered.
5. Better evidence is available to influence the services that help reduce isolation for older people in the future.

There is at least £70 million available and we want fund 15 to 20 local authority areas from across England. We expect local communities within each area to come together to form a partnership. We will award each partnership between £2 and £6 million for a project lasting between three to six years.

What are we looking for?

We want to fund community-led approaches that enable older people who are most at risk of social isolation and loneliness to lead more fulfilling lives. We want local communities to come forward with creative proposals that reflect their local needs and aspirations.

There are some clear principles which are essential to what we want to fund:

- ideas for change need to come from the experiences of older people in your area, so we'll be looking for the genuine involvement of older people throughout all stages of consultation, planning, delivery and evaluation
- we are seeking a proactive and preventative approaches to the challenges of older people's social isolation
- we want to see people working together across the public, private, and voluntary sectors, so that there is the widest possible positive change in services and approaches
- we are looking for a strong commitment to learning, which is then shared as widely as possible.

We know from research, organisations we have consulted, and from conversations with older people themselves, that there are certain triggers and risk factors that lead to greater social isolation:

- **Personal circumstances** such as living alone, being single, widowed or divorced.
- **Personal characteristics** such as being very old, ethnicity or sexual orientation.
- **Transitions** such as bereavement, retirement, or becoming (or no longer being) a carer.
- **Health and disability** including immobility, or cognitive or sensory impairment.
- **Geography** due to local deprivation or transport issues.

Local organisations will be best placed to identify the priority groups and target localities within their areas so we are not necessarily expecting projects to work in every part of a local authority area or to address every aspect of social isolation. In some areas, the most effective approach may be wide-ranging, whereas elsewhere a more closely targeted scheme may be better. However, we do need to understand how the context and demographics of an area has informed the groups of older people or neighbourhoods prioritised.

Learning and impact

As well as funding new and improved approaches to provision for older people at risk of social isolation, we also want to measure the social and economic impact of our investment. To do this, we will commission a thorough evaluation to assess what has worked and why. With our support, all of the partnerships must participate in evaluating activities, gathering data and sharing learning.

We want our funding to make a lasting impact, so we'll expect each partnership to have plans for ensuring that any successes are continued after our funding ends.

Older people involvement

Older people must play a genuine and ongoing role in the partnership delivering the project as we believe that, with targeted support, older people can improve their own circumstances. Older people should be central in all key decisions that affect them and take a lead role in:

- identifying the priorities for addressing social isolation
- planning how and where to address these priorities
- helping to manage or deliver new or better services where appropriate
- supporting the learning, evaluation and continuous improvement of any approaches.

What happens when?

Expression of interest stage

We are first inviting 100 local authorities to submit an expression of interest form. Local authorities should use this form to express an interest in being one of the geographical areas to be considered for funding.

Only local authorities can submit this form, and only one will be accepted from each local authority area, though we would welcome proposals for cross-boundary working where two or more authorities within the list of 100 want to work together.

From the expressions of interest we receive, we will select a shortlist of 30 areas to take forward to the vision and strategy stage.

Vision and strategy stage

Those areas that proceed to the vision and strategy stage must form a partnership led by a voluntary and community sector organisation. There can only be one partnership for each of the 30 areas shortlisted.

This voluntary and community sector organisation will be our main point of contact on behalf of the partnership and we will publicise that they are leading the project in the local authority area on our website. We will offer this organisation up to £20,000 of development funding to help with organising and writing a vision and strategy.

The lead voluntary and community sector organisation will have legal responsibility for all funding we award, and be financially accountable for any funds that are distributed to partners and delivery services. We will expect this organisation to ensure our reporting requirements are being met, whilst working with our external evaluator to agree appropriate monitoring systems and ensure they are being implemented.

Working in partnership will be essential to the success of all projects and we will test the strength of these relationships when we receive a vision and strategy. Partnerships must include relevant organisations from across the private, voluntary and public sectors. There must also be representation from at least one older people's advocacy group.

A support and development team will help support these partnerships as they develop their plans. Each partnership will be expected to demonstrate the ways in which our investment can add the most value by connecting with other local and national schemes or strategies.

A panel made up of England Committee members, experts and older people from our stakeholder group, will consider the vision and strategy we receive, and will select around 15 to 20 partnerships to develop detailed project plans.

Project planning stage

The voluntary and community sector organisation that submitted the vision and strategy to us will continue to lead the partnership in developing a detailed project proposal. We will also need all of the organisations that will have a formal delivery role in the project to sign up to a partnership agreement. We will be able to pay up to £50,000 from your funding up front to help with working up the detail of the project plan.

What else do I need to know or do?

Our Getting funding and planning successful projects guide is a must read for all applicants. It explains the key elements of our approach to funding and has examples that will help you.

Contacting us

If you have any general enquiries about Big Lottery Fund or our funding, please get in touch.

Phone: 0845 4 10 20 30

Email: general.enquiries@biglotteryfund.org.uk

Help with communication

If you have a hearing impairment you can contact us using a textphone on 0845 6 02 16 59.

We can send you this publication in other formats, such as large print or audiotape.

We will also try to help with other communication needs. Just let us know how we can help you.