

Local Sustainability Fund

Programme Update for Applicants

Funding

Q. What can the LSF programme fund?

As long as the activities your organisation plans to deliver are focused on the long term sustainability of the organisation, have been identified via the Diagnostic Report or discussion with your Advisor and are strongly justified in the application, they will be considered.

Q. What about salaries?

The fund will pay towards the costs of taking existing members of staff in your organisation from their daily role to work on the LSF project. In this respect, the organisation can then cover the costs of staff to back fill these positions. Where an existing member of staff is working on the LSF project, but their position is not being back filled, this work would need to be in addition to their current contracted work.

Q. We want some funding towards a capital project. Can we have this?

The capital limit (£5k) on LSF, as per the guidance at the front of the application form, is more focussed on equipment required to deliver the project, rather than any specific larger capital projects. However, if a capital activity forms part of a wider plan to cut costs and not a standalone activity, then this will be considered, but the £5k limit still applies.

Advisor and Local Business

Q. Who can the advisor be? And how long should we be working with them?

There is no restriction on who the advisor can be, as long as their selection can be strongly justified. So consider what skills and knowledge they have and why they would be appropriate to work with your organisation. In this respect this does not exclude Trustees of the organisation being an advisor, however, it should also be considered whether they will be truly critical of your organisation and be able to challenge objectively, due to their links with the organisation. We expect an organisation to be working with their advisor for the duration of the project as they are a key element of implementing the change plan.

Q. Can we have more than one advisor?

Yes. There is nothing preventing your organisation working with two advisors, should that be something you wish to do.

Q. Who can the local business be?

The links with a local business forms an important part of the project and the assessment. It is important that organisations look to make these links with a local business as they are a good source of extra advice, skill and knowledge that can help your organisation, so it is important organisations utilise this as a method of developing long term sustainability. One thing to consider is that the local business does not have to be a well known business, which may be difficult to establish links with. Some local businesses that may be overlooked could be educational establishments or sports clubs. Organisations should also look within their trustees who may be part of a local business that they could forge links with. As long as your organisation can provide good reasons for making links with the local business you choose, there is no restriction on the type of business this can be. There are no prescribed requirements on where the business is based or its size. However, the business should be able to provide the support specified in the guidance at the start of the application form and particularly in relation to the volunteering element, we would expect there to be a meaningful relationship with the business.

The VCSE Diagnostic

Q. Which part of the Diagnostic Report should we be focusing on; the five highlighted areas or the weaker scoring areas from the Summary Report indicators?

The Diagnostic Report should be reviewed as a whole report taking into consideration both the ratings within the 14 categories and the five questions highlighted as being areas that require some development when reviewing your change plan.

Q. After discussion with our Advisor, we have decided not to focus on all the areas in the Diagnostic Report which were identified for development. Can we do this?

Yes. We would expect an organisation to justify which areas of the Diagnostic report they have chosen to address and those they have chosen not to address. This doesn't need to be in great detail, but provide some reasoning for the organisation's decisions.

Q. How can I access my specific responses on the Diagnostic Tool?

We notified all users of the Diagnostic Tool on 14 September 2015 that the specific responses had been unlocked and can now be viewed. You can access the responses from your Diagnostic Report summary page. You can then access the specific responses by clicking on each of the six numbered tabs at the top of the page. The stage one application was based on the specific responses given within the Diagnostic Tool.

Q. Can I print off the specific responses?

Unfortunately, there is no functionality within the Diagnostic Tool to print off the specific responses. You can however, use the print function on your browser within each of the numbered tabs to print off the responses.

Application Form

Q. I'm having trouble fitting my response into the application form text boxes, but I am still within the character limits

Please see attached updated application form. The boxes have been expanded and the text format has been changed to a narrower font, which will allow the text to fit clearly into the boxes. We suggest simple formatting and not using spaces between paragraphs to use the space more effectively.

Q. Is the focus of my application on the changes to the organisation only or should I be considering our beneficiaries too?

The focus of the Local Sustainability Fund is to develop your organisation and improve its long term sustainability. Although the longer term outcome and impact of these changes will be for your beneficiaries and should also be considered and evidenced in your application, the direct focus of the project is on the organisational changes.