



A guide to the Women and Girls initiative

For use in England only

If you are thinking about applying for funding for a project that works with women and girls please read this guidance to see if this initiative is for you.

If you are interested in applying you must contact our Big Advice Line on 0345 4 10 20 30 before 5.00pm on 16 July 2015.

What is it about?

Background

Over the last decade or so the women and girls sector has grown in strength, size and capability. Issues that were once marginalised have emerged as mainstream concerns and women's sector agencies are at the centre of best practice and creative initiatives. However, for a variety of reasons the women's sector has been significantly affected by recent cuts in public sector spending, at a time when the issues the sector deals with – domestic and sexual violence and abuse, sexual exploitation, forced marriage and female genital mutilation – have never been so prominent.

We will invest up to £45 million in projects, delivered by the women and girls sector, that provide ambitious, person-centred interventions to women and girls in need, or at risk of experiencing a wide variety of issues.

The aim of this funding is to empower women and girls to take control of their lives.

To achieve this we will fund projects that can meet **all four** funding outcomes:

- 1 Increased provision of holistic, person-centred approaches for women and girls at risk
- 2 Increased role and voice for women and girls in co-producing services
- 3 A greater number of women and girls are supported through the provision of improved specialist support
- 4 Better quality of evidence for what works in empowering women and girls

What do we mean by co-producing services?

We are looking to put women and girls in the lead. We want to draw on their strengths, experience and expertise to help shape the services that are developed to support them. As a result we would expect all projects to proactively engage women and girls in the planning, design, delivery and evaluation of the services they provide.

What do we mean by holistic, person-centred approach?

We are only interested in funding projects that support a holistic, person-centred approach. By this we mean an approach that deals not only with the immediate issue, but over time also picks up on any other issues the women or girls would benefit from working

through. So for example, a woman may ask for help because she is in an abusive relationship, but once that immediate situation is stabilised there may be a range of issues that she may need support with to get her life back to where she wants it to be. These issues could include advice on her finances, her permanent housing options, legal advice on her status or children, emotional support ranging from the light touch peer support to more acute mental health issues.

The range and combination of issues can be varied and we would expect the projects we fund to have the right networks, partnerships and relationships to be able to provide the wrap-around care for the women and girls.

We want to hear from you if...

You are delivering a holistic, person-centred approach to working with women and/or girls and:

- 1 Your organisation's primary purpose is to support women and girls
- 2 You have a proven track-record in delivering services for women and girls
- 3 You are a not-for-profit organisation. By 'not-for-profit', we mean the following types of civil society organisation:
 - a voluntary and community unincorporated charitable association
 - a registered charity
 - a community benefit society registered as an industrial and provident society
 - a community interest company
 - an organisation of another type not listed above if you operate as a social enterprise and principally reinvest surpluses for social benefit.

What can I apply for?

Ambition

We are happy to fund existing good work but we are particularly looking for ambitious proposals from organisations wanting to make a step-change. This could mean significantly scaling up their provision, a substantial roll out of an existing approach or demonstrating the value of a new approach. We want to fund promising practice which can be replicated elsewhere.

We will fund projects that work with women in need but also those who are at risk of need. This means we will also fund projects with an early action/prevention agenda run by the women and girls sector.

We know the women and girls sector has been significantly impacted by the cuts but within this group we are aware that Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee Groups (BAMER) women and girls organisations have suffered so we are particularly interested in funding specialist services that seek to address the needs of this group.

We are looking for models that:

- involve women and girls in the planning, design, delivery and evaluation of projects
- don't have barriers to access their service – they will support any woman or girl that approaches them to get the support and help that she needs
- enable trusted relationships to build over time (this can be years)
- provide safe spaces for women (we expect the majority of these to be women only spaces – and would need to understand why they are not)
- combine the skills of professionals (who can provide technical knowledge about systems and processes) with peer workers (who share their lived experience)
- can provide evidence of effective, appropriate partnership working.

Evaluation and learning

Organisations must include up to 10 per cent of the project budget for learning and evaluation activities. Where an applicant is applying for funding to support existing interventions, we expect good evidence of impact to date. For new interventions we expect applicants to provide a clear case which explains the potential benefits and demand for what you want to do.

We expect learning from the project to be shared and you should be able to tell us who the audiences for this might be. We support projects sharing their learning or gathering evidence across multiple funded projects.

Grant size and length

The main grants through this initiative are between £150,000 and £750,000 over a period of three to five years.

Strategic projects

In addition to these standard grants we will consider making two or three large scale investments of over £750,000 if we think they are of strategic value.

These grants must meet the eligibility criteria and outcomes for the women and girls initiative but in addition we expect these projects to have an England wide benefit, whether directly in their work or through the wider benefit of project learning and outcomes.

The strategic projects should have a strong preventative/early action element and enable a longer term change around particular key issues that women and girls face through change in perceptions or attitudes amongst policy makers.

We will pay for

Revenue costs

You can apply to us for some or all of the revenue costs associated with the delivery of your project.

Overheads

You can include a contribution towards your overheads as part of your revenue funding. By overheads we mean the costs of employees, equipment, space and services that partly support the project you want to fund but also support your other work. For more information please refer to the guidance for full cost recovery on the Big Lottery Fund website.

Capital costs

You can include capital costs of up to five per cent of the total grant. We can support some capital costs for small-scale building refurbishments or items of equipment. However, given this initiative is about supporting woman and girls groups to develop and embed the most promising practice, we would not expect capital costs to be major elements of your project. Any capital funding requested should include all relevant costs, such as irrecoverable VAT.

Capacity building

We recognise that to achieve your ambitions you may need to invest in the capabilities of your staff and beneficiaries by building up their skills, knowledge and confidence. As a result we would encourage you to include up to £15,000 for support and development costs in your project budget.

We will not pay for

- costs you have to pay for before we give you a grant
- any costs which someone else is paying for, whether in cash or in kind
- items that only benefit an individual and are not needed to deliver the project outcomes
- travel outside the UK
- funds to build up a reserve or surplus, whether distributable or not
- loan repayments
- contributions to general appeals.

If we recognise that you need more support in the development of your idea we'll talk this through with you.

This feels right for me, how do I find out more?

If you are interested in applying to this initiative you must contact the Big Advice Line on **0345 4 10 20 30** (text relay **18001** plus **0345 4 10 20 30** for those with a hearing impairment) **before 17:00 on 16 July 2015**. We encourage you to call as soon as you can so you have the maximum amount of time available to work with us to develop your project.

A member of our Big Advice Team will discuss your project with you to determine whether your project is suitable for funding through this initiative. If your project is suitable, a member of the funding team will contact you to arrange a time to speak with you.

This funding officer will be a named contact who is available for you to contact to discuss and develop your idea for funding. The aim of this ongoing conversation will be for us to gain a better understanding of your organisation and your project which will help inform our decision about which projects to invite to the next application stage. It may be by phone or face to face.

By **14 August 2015**, we will have agreed with you an outline of your project. The outcome of these conversations will be shared via email to ensure that you are happy with what has been recorded.

Next steps

During August and September we will take stock of all the projects that have expressed an interest in the women and girls initiative. We may at this point contact you for more information and we will identify projects we feel will best meet our ambition. These organisations will then be able to formally apply for this initiative.

You should expect to hear from us before **2 October 2015** if we would like to take your idea further.

Invited organisations will receive a full application form, along with further information about the application process. We will continue to support organisations during the application period. We are expecting to make final awards in **March 2016**.

This is a competitive process and we expect to make 60–70 awards. This initiative is supported by an independent decision making panel, consisting of sector experts and people with lived experience, who will have responsibility for final decision making for this initiative.

Key Dates*

18 June 2015

Initiative launch

16 July 2015

Deadline for registering your interest in the initiative

25 June – 14 August 2015

Ongoing conversations with organisations

1 October 2015

Organisations invited to application stage

March 2016

Decisions made

*Dates may change so please continue to check the webpage for the latest information