Guidelines
Express Grant Programme

Please call or email us if you have any questions about this grant programme. Our contact details are in section 11 of this document. **Please note** that this document was updated in April 2025. Please take the time to read and understand the following information before applying.

1. About the Express Grant Programme

This grant programme aims to support local grassroots groups and small to medium-sized organisations (see section 3) working with communities* experiencing inequalities and disadvantage. Within this, we will prioritise funding towards activities, projects and services that:

- Address the impact of economic disadvantage; and/or

- Improve the lives of those who have limited access to appropriate or affordable services and support.

*This can be geographic communities and/or communities of people brought together by race or ethnicity, age, disability, gender, or sexual orientation.

We will prioritise applications where we're confident that your work:

- Involves people in your decision making who have lived experience of the issues/challenges that your work addresses. We understand your approach to involving people may vary and can depend on certain factors. See Appendix 1 for further information on different approaches to user involvement.
- Complements, or is making links to, existing work by other local groups or organisations that serve or support the same people/communities.
- Will make effective use of our grant. As we have limited funds available, we need to prioritise work that will have the greatest impact on addressing inequalities and disadvantage.

The environment
We also welcome requests for funding towards work that is taking positive action for nature and the environment with communities currently experiencing economic disadvantage.

We encourage all applicants to think about the environmental impact of the work they are planning. We have advice and guidance on environmental considerations on our website at https://quartetcf.org.uk/grants-support/

2. What you can apply for

You can apply for a grant towards a new activity or continue something you are already doing. You should plan to start spending the grant within six months of it being awarded.

A grant can be towards any reasonable costs for your organisation or project including:

- core or running costs

- project and activity costs

- capital costs (e.g. equipment, refurbishment/building costs)

Whatever the type of costs you seek a grant towards, we will consider several factors when assessing your application, such as the size of your organisation, the cost and scale of your project/activity, other sources of funding etc.

See Appendix 2 for examples of work that has been funded through the Express programme.

3. Who can apply?

Applicants **must be based and working** in Bristol, Bath & North-East Somerset, North Somerset or South Gloucestershire. You can apply for a grant if you are a:

- constituted voluntary or community organisation
- registered charity
- not-for-profit company, including Community Interest Companies where they are not limited by shares and most directors receive no payment from the company.

Please note that you must have at least three registered trustees or directors with the majority being unrelated and not living at the same address. For CICs, we may not award a grant where you have one or two directors registered as 'Persons with Significant Control' with Companies House. We may offer some flexibility if this is your first application to us. Please contact us if you have any questions about this.

Please see our eligibility criteria for further information. This can be found on our website in 'Am I eligible for support?'. See www.quartetcf.org.uk/grants-support/am-i-eligible-for-support/

The size of your organisation

Our Express grants are aimed at small, local charities and community organisations. This means we will prioritise those with an income under £1 million, particularly those with an income under £0.5 million. When assessing applications, we will also consider the level of reserves that an applicant holds.

4. How much do we award?

Grants are available from £500 – £5,000.

5. Repeat Applications

You can only receive one grant from the Express programme in any 12-month period, regardless of the size of the grant. Please contact us if you need to check the dates of a previous Express grant.

If you have had funding from the Express programme for the last three years

We will not support applicants who have received an Express grant for the last three years in a row. After receiving a grant for three consecutive years, we request a one-year break.

If you recently had funding from other programmes at Quartet

You are eligible to apply for a grant from the Express programme if you have recently received a grant from one of our other programmes. However, if you are currently in receipt of several grants then we may consider this when assessing your application. This is because of our limited funds and wanting to ensure a fair distribution of our grants.

If you have had a recent application to Express declined

If you have recently applied to the Express programme and were unsuccessful, please contact us before applying again.

6. What we don't fund

- Costs that are incurred before a grant can be awarded
- Individuals
- Activities or services that the government and other public bodies currently have a statutory responsibility to provide
- Groups/organisations or activities that are giving support to a political party
- Activities that are intended to influence people's religious choices
- Activities that are primarily supporting animal welfare

- Arts projects with no strong community or charitable element to them, that are not supporting people/communities experiencing disadvantage. Arts projects must also demonstrate good local knowledge of the area they are working in.

- Sports projects with no strong community or charitable element to them, that are not supporting people/communities experiencing disadvantage. Sports projects must be addressing a particular inequality or disadvantage in society (not an inequality within the sport).

- Activities in schools that are potentially replacing statutory provision and that are part of the core curriculum. We are also unlikely to fund work taking place during teaching time. For work taking place in schools, we will assess the local need for the project/activity, how it has been identified, the broader community benefit, and the involvement of local people in developing the activities.

- We are unlikely to award a large grant for a one-off event or celebration. We may offer a contribution when it is clear there is a wider community benefit.

- Medical research, equipment or treatment

- Activities that raise funds for other organisations

7. How to apply

There are no closing dates for this grant programme and we accept applications at any time. You will need to complete an application form. You can apply online at www.quartetcf.org.uk. As well as the completed application form you will also need to provide the following*:

• A constitution/governing document/set of rules.
• The contact details of at least 3 members of your management committee/board of trustees/board of directors.
• A copy of your most recent annual accounts or financial records that show your organisation's balance of funds, income and expenditure. If you do not have financial records that cover a full year, then you will need to provide the records you currently have.
• A safeguarding policy that is up-to-date and relevant to your work.
• The contact details of a referee. The referee should know the work of the applicant organisation in a professional capacity but not be directly involved in this work.

* Please **do not** provide the above documents if you have sent them to Quartet within the past six months unless they have been amended during that time. Please contact us if you have difficulty supplying any of the above supporting documents.

If you do not currently have a bank account:
In the application form, you will need to provide the details of your organisation's bank account. If your organisation does not have its own bank account, you can provide the bank details of another charitable organisation if they meet our eligibility criteria and there is an agreement in place.

If you cannot provide many of the above documents:
Another charitable organisation can apply on your behalf provided it is able to:
- Supply the above documents.
- Have their name as the main contact and be responsible for submitting the application.
- Be responsible for receiving, overseeing and reporting back on the use of any grant awarded.

This will not affect the applicant organisation's ability to apply for the maximum annual grant available for its own purposes.

Please contact us if you have any queries about supplying the above supporting documents. Our contact details are in section 11 of this document.

8. What will happen next?
Once we have received your application (including all supporting documents) it will be checked to make sure your request fits the funding criteria. We will contact you by email or phone if we have any questions. Your application will then be considered by a panel who will decide if your request can be funded. **We will email you the panel's decision within 8 weeks.**

9. Reporting on the use of your grant
We will send you an End of Grant report form based on when you indicate you will have finished spending the grant. This form asks for details of how the grant was spent and what was achieved.

10. Further guidance and support
In addition to reading this document, please visit the Grants and Support page of our website at www.quartetcf.org.uk/grants-support/ where you can find:
- A guide to completing an application form which you can download and print
- Top tips for grant applicants – a short video on what to consider when applying

Also, within the Grants and Support section of our website you can find the following pages:
- 'Am I eligible for support' – providing further information on our eligibility criteria
- 'Help and Guidance (FAQs)'

11. Contact details
If you need more information or wish to discuss your application before you apply, please contact
the Philanthropy Team at Quartet Community Foundation:
Telephone: 0117 989 7700
Email: applications@quartetcf.org.uk
Address: Royal Oak House, Royal Oak Avenue, Bristol BS1 4GB.

How we collect and hold your data
The personal information collected via the application form is collected to process applications for grants from Quartet. All information is collected in accordance with the *Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA),* and the *General Data Protection Regulations 2018 (GDPR).* For further information see our Privacy Policy at http://quartetcf.org.uk/privacy-policy/

Appendix 1: User Involvement

We understand your approach to involving people with lived experience may vary and can depend on certain factors. Below is an overview of five different approaches to involvement, taken from 'Make it Count: Why impact matters in user involvement' (New Philanthropy Capital, 2018)

- Research: People with lived experience provide their views or information to help answer a broad set of research questions. Information tends to flow one-way. Many use this approach (often in the form of surveys) to ensure they make informed decisions about how to meet need.

- Consultation and feedback: People with lived experience are invited to submit their views or feedback on a particular question or to test an idea or service. Many use this approach when they conduct user testing or when gathering feedback on a service. They then make changes based on their findings.

- Collaboration and co-design: People with lived experience provide more open input than in a consultation and have sway over what gets decided. As with all approaches, the extent of their influence on decision-making should be agreed and transparent.

- Co-production: This can mean going one step further than collaboration and co-design, when decision-making power is shared between the parties working side-by-side, such as the staff and trustees of an organisation and people with lived experience. This is where people with lived experience have as much of a say on what gets decided on specific aspects of an organisation's work as those in the organisation.

- User-led: People with lived experience lead decision-making and are supported to achieve their goals by others. For example, this can include having members on the board with lived experience, or staff within an organisation.

Appendix 2: Examples of Express grants previously awarded

- Activities that increase awareness and accessibility of free mental health support for young people living in disadvantaged areas of Bath and North East Somerset.
- Football and basketball sessions for Somali girls and workshops and one-to-one sessions for boys and girls to help reduce involvement in crime in Bristol.
- Towards the annual cost of peer support group sessions for women affected by post-natal depression.
- Towards the upkeep and promotion of a local helpline supporting LGBTQ+ young people.
- To support the cost of delivering a specialist welfare benefits service for older people in South Gloucestershire.
- To provide training sessions to parents of disabled children, and those with additional needs, focusing on 'Sensory Play' and how to extend it into the home.
- Towards equipment and resources for a set of local volunteer gardeners working to improve the appearance of a run down and disadvantaged neighbourhood.
- Towards the cost of continuing a scheme that provides heat surveys for households and energy efficiency advice for the benefit of low-income households.
- For a targeted programme of activity to increase access to Circus City for a wider audience, specifically Neurodiverse, D/deaf and Disabled audiences.

Appendix 3: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

Why it's important to us

Quartet has a commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion[1] and we are always trying to improve in this area. As well as trying to be inclusive in our own practices, we think we have a responsibility as a funder to try and encourage more inclusive practices in the organisations that we support and reach those communities which are often most hidden and/or excluded.

Being inclusive involves creating an environment where people of all backgrounds, abilities and identities feel valued, respected and included.

We understand that different charitable groups have different resources and capacities to engage with EDI. It may not always be possible or appropriate to adopt some practices, but these are some areas to consider:

Accessibility

- Physical accessibility, ensuring that people with physical and sensory impairments aren't excluded by physical barriers. This could include providing wheelchair access, accessible toilets, clear pathways.
- Digital accessibility, such as using captioning and audio descriptions for online activities.
- Flexible participation options, offering multiple ways to participate and ensuring that people who don't have online access can get involved.
- Language – considering clear language, inclusive language, different languages and alternative formats where possible.
- Publicising your services, ensuring that phone numbers and websites are accessible; considering physical publicity as well as digital; and/or working with community groups and broader publications where people might see things visually rather than online.

Resources:

Inclusive Employers have produced this guide Guide-to-Inclusive-Workspaces.pdf

Fairer Consulting, a DEI training and consultancy agency, has a free toolkit with key terms, videos, guides, training and tools DEI Starter Toolkit | FAIRER Consulting

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[1] Equity is a process focussed on ensuring fair access, opportunities and resources for all individuals, recognising that individuals have different circumstances and addressing imbalances that may exist. Diversity is recognising and valuing differences amongst individuals, such as ethnicity, gender, age. Inclusion is about creating environments where any individual or group is, and feels, welcomed, supported, valued and empowered.

Governance and planning

- Reflecting the community you serve in your board, staff team and volunteers and including people with a range of experiences, perspectives and backgrounds.
- Planning and designing your services and your decision making to include a range of voices.

Resources:

There is some helpful information on the NCVO website about EDI at board level Explaining equality, diversity and inclusion | NCVO

BeOnBoard is an organisation which supports EDI leadership strategy and talent matching.

The Charity Governance Code has a section on EDI.

Staffing and recruitment

- Targeting underrepresented communities in advertising roles and using processes that reduce bias in recruitment.
- Implementing training for staff and volunteers in equity, diversity and inclusion practices.
- Setting up an internal working group across your organisation to consider EDI, make changes and implement action

Resources:

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development has a guide Inclusive recruitment: Guide for employers | CIPD

Activity and services

- Spending time understanding the needs of the community you support and designing activities to reflect these.
- Ensuring services are accessible to people and removing barriers which may prevent people's involvement. For example, ensuring physical accessibility, or providing materials in different formats.
- Ensuring services respect and include people's diverse cultural practices.

Communications and language

- Ensuring that people are able to contact you easily and in a variety of ways.
- Providing information in an accessible way and ensuring that it avoids stereotypes and is sensitive to people's needs and preferences.

Resources:

Scope has a guide on disability inclusive language [Inclusive language guide and examples for disability](#)

Volunteer management

- Ensuring that volunteer roles accommodate different needs, and that volunteers are provided with adequate training to carry out their roles.

We encourage organisations to demonstrate that they are committed to ensuring that everyone who could benefit from their services can access them and participate fully. We hope that organisations will make changes based on feedback and review practices regularly. This is something we aim to do at Quartet, as we know there is always room for improvement.

June 2025