

# Guide for Applicants: Lead the Change



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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 take the time to read and understand the following information before applying. It is recommended that you also read the FAQs at the end of this document.

## 1. About Lead the Change

Lead the Change is a new, three-year initiative launched by BBC Children in Need, in partnership with Co-op Foundation, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Henry Smith Foundation, Joseph Levy Foundation, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Postcode Justice Trust, UK Community Foundations and The National Lottery Community Fund.

The programme will support young people to play a leading role in strengthening relationships, fostering understanding and building belonging in their communities.

Research shows that many young people feel disconnected, less heard by decision makers, and increasingly cautious about expressing themselves – especially online, where exposure to harmful or misleading content can be common. Combined with financial pressures facing families and communities, these factors can deepen isolation and weaken young people's sense of belonging.

Lead the Change will invest directly in youth leadership, community connection and opportunity. The programme will enable youth-led projects, create safe spaces, and strengthen relationships across communities. It will help young people to build skills, which can include navigating online information and shaping positive narratives.

## 2. Key information

- Location: For project/activities taking place in Bristol
- Number of grants to be awarded: **We expect to award one grant**
- Total grant size: £123,353
- Grant duration: 3 years
- Applicants will be required to demonstrate:

- the strength of youth leadership and voice within their organisation
- relevance to target communities, which are **young people impacted by xenophobia, racism, and Islamophobia** .
- safeguarding and trauma-informed practice
- capacity to deliver and sustain impact and a commitment to the [six principles of high-quality youth social action](#).
- You can apply if you are already funded by BBC Children in Need or a Community Foundation, but you cannot apply for the same work that is already funded (or any work already funded by another organisation).
- You can only apply for and hold one Lead the Change grant.

We particularly welcome applications from organisations led by people most impacted by xenophobia, racism and Islamophobia.

### 3. What this programme aims to achieve

Lead the Change aims to:

- Strengthen community connection and safety.
- Empower young people as leaders, storytellers and changemakers.
- Support young people to build digital literacy and challenge harmful narratives.
- Increase opportunity through skills and leadership pathways.
- Build a national movement for youth-led connection and change.

### 4. Who can apply?

Lead the Change is open to registered not-for-profit organisations. This means registered charities or Community Interest Companies (limited by guarantee). Also, you must:

- Have an annual turnover of no more than £2m
- Have at least three trustees/members of the governing body
- Be based and working in the city of Bristol
- Work with children and young people aged 18 years and under
- Work in the heart of their communities and be trusted by young people
- Put the voices, experiences and skills of children and young people at the centre of everything you do, from design to delivery
- Demonstrate strong safeguarding and trauma-informed practice
- Be keen to keep learning about and developing your work with children and young people

**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 Community Interest Companies (CICs),

we may not award a grant where you have one or two directors registered as 'Persons with Significant Control' with Companies House.

**Partnerships** will be considered. Please read the FAQs at the end of this document for further information.

Because this is a large multi-year grant, **we need to be confident that your organisation has the capacity, systems, and track record required to manage funding at this level** . Please consider this carefully before applying.

## 5. What you can apply for

Lead the Change will fund work that strengthens local relationships, builds confidence and belonging, and gives young people the tools to lead change.

We are keen to fund organisations that will support young people to drive positive change in their communities informed by local priorities. Projects and activities could include:

- Safe spaces for young people to meet and connect – youth clubs, sports, creative and cultural spaces.
- Youth-led community action and resilience – co-designed projects, leadership development, intercultural initiatives to bring people together.
- Pathways to opportunity – skills development, mentoring, training and connection to training or apprenticeships.
- Narrative change and digital literacy – tackling misinformation and disinformation, storytelling and youth-created content.

## 6. What applicants must demonstrate

- Close alignment with the aims of Lead the Change.
- Relevance to target communities – young people impacted by xenophobia, racism, and Islamophobia.
- A track record of working within your community and ability to show how your project or activity will create meaningful, measurable change for local children and young people.
- The strength of youth leadership and voice within your organisation (in design and/or delivery and/or governance).
- Safeguarding and trauma-informed practice, capacity to deliver and sustain impact and a commitment to the [six principles of high-quality youth social action](#).
- Strong local connections, including lived experience, community leadership, or volunteer involvement from the children, young people, and families you support.

- Capacity to deliver safely and sustainably.

We particularly welcome applications from organisations led by people most impacted by xenophobia, racism and Islamophobia.

## 7. What we won't fund

Please see the eligibility page on our website for organisations and activities that Quartet will not support. See the link [here](#).

In addition, this programme will not support:

- Core costs (reasonable, evidenced overheads are okay as part of the budget for your project application)
- Individuals
- Housing Associations
- Pregnancy testing or advice, information, or counselling on pregnancy choices
- Awareness-raising work, except where targeted at children or young people most at risk
- Capital costs for large items, renovations, refurbishments or building projects (small project related capital items are acceptable, but cannot form a significant portion of the budget)
- Bursaries, sponsored places, fees, or similar costs
- Trips abroad or any activity taking place outside of the UK
- Holidays
- Unspecified expenditure
- General appeals, endowments or debt repayment
- Projects unable to start within three months of the grant award date
- Projects already funded through other means
- Any activity that is already being funded through a Quartet Community Foundation or Children in Need grant. We cannot fund the same activity twice. All applications should clearly demonstrate that they are either for different work or for work with a different cohort of children and young people

## 8. Application Process

Quartet Community Foundation expects to award one grant of £123,353. There are two stages to applying:

### **Stage 1: Expression of Interest (EOI)**

- Opens 1 April 2026

- Closes 29 April 2026 at 1 pm

The EOI is short. You'll be asked for basic organisational information, a brief overview of your proposed work, and initial safeguarding confirmation. You will be contacted by 13 May if you have been invited to make a full application.

### **Stage 2: Full Application (Invitation Only)**

- Invitations sent to successful applicants in May.
- You will have at least four weeks to complete the full application and you'll be told the deadline when you receive the invitation.
- When assessing your application, we will call you to discuss your safeguarding procedures.

Full applications ask for more detail about your project, youth leadership, safeguarding, governance, finances and delivery plan. You will hear the outcome in mid to late August.

### **Stage 3: The Children in Need decision process**

Applications will be reviewed by the Children in Need Youth Panel, Steering Committee and Impact Committee. They will make the final funding decision on all applications. Decisions will be communicated mid to late August.

## **9. If you are funded**

- You will receive a grant offer and funding agreement.
- Projects/activities are expected to start as soon as possible.
- You will join a national learning community and take part in shared learning and youth-focused activities.
- Quartet Community Foundation will support you with reporting.

## **10. How to apply:**

You must be operating in Bristol to apply via Quartet Community Foundation. You need to submit an Expression of Interest form, which you can access via our website [here](#).

## **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](mailto: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/>

## **FAQs**

**Q: I already have a grant with BBC Children in Need – can I apply?**

A: Yes, but not for the same work.

**Q: I already have a grant with Quartet Community Foundation. Can I apply?**

A: Yes, but not for the same work.

**Q: I have a member of staff in a post that is part-funded already. Can I apply for funding for the other unfunded part of the post, so that they can work on my eligible project?**

A: Yes – you will need to provide evidence to support this with your application.

**Q: My organisation delivers work in Bristol but isn't based there. Can I apply?**

A: We expect most organisations we fund in this programme to be small community organisations which both work in and are based in the places we are targeting. We will prioritise organisations that meet both of these aims. In places where there are lots of youth organisations that are based in the place directly, an application from an organisation outside of that place is unlikely to be successful.

**Q: My organisation is not eligible to apply because we are not registered, can we apply via a host?**

A: Applications from host organisations will be accepted where this is the most impactful way to meet the aims of the programme, and where there is a demonstrated need for this way of working (for example, a smaller organisation is the only one trusted by a particular community).

The host must be co-delivering the work (not simply passing the funds on), take the lead on delivery, and takes full responsibility for adhering to the terms and conditions of the grant including the finance, governance and safeguarding, for the lifetime of the project.

**Q: My organisation wants to work in partnership with others. Can we apply together?**

A: All applications must be made by one organisation. One organisation can apply as a “host” to work with up to two other organisations, where they can demonstrate that this approach is the most impactful way to meet the aims of the programme.

The host must be co-delivering the work (not simply passing the funds on) and takes full responsibility for adhering to the terms and conditions of the grant, including the finance, governance and safeguarding, for the lifetime of the project.

The organisation applying must be an eligible organisation type and assume financial management responsibilities for a grant. The other partners should also meet our minimum requirements, as outlined in section 4 of this document.

While applicants can collaborate with up to two other organisations formally, they can also partner informally (i.e. not transferring any funds, not named as a co-applicant) with as many other organisations as they wish.

Partnerships involving schools: schools cannot receive funds, even as secondary partners, but can be informal collaborators - for example, hosting activities outside lesson times, providing referrals, or co-developing project plans. While schools may benefit indirectly (such as receiving materials to encourage pupil participation outside school), all core services must occur outside regular school hours.