



# Guide to Funding

September 2026

**We know that charities and community groups are always thinking about how they adapt and sustain their services to provide help and support to those in need across County Durham.**

**It is our aim to support organisations with funding advice by promoting all funding opportunities as they arise through our website, news bulletins, social media channels and through the continued operation of our dedicated Information, Advice and Guidance service offer.**

In this guide we will provide a short introduction to resilience and sustainability funders, helping you to choose which funds best meet your needs and the needs of those you are supporting.

This guide is not an exhaustive list; there are other funds available and new funds are regularly released.

We will endeavour to keep the information in this guide as accurate as possible and respond to updates from funders as quickly as possible.

## **What can I do now?**

Scenario planning and risk management are useful activities that help trustee boards to plan for an unpredictable future by considering what needs to be put in place to build on existing services or help consider how to adapt the way you work to best meet the changing needs of your beneficiaries.

Financial planning is also important, and funders might ask to see your organisational budgets and so thorough preparation of actual and projected income and expenditure as you shape your funding strategy is key.

Our training and information sessions focusing on recovery and resilience are available online and more information can be found [here](#)

We have identified a list of funders below who regularly provide grants and other funding to voluntary and community organisations in our region. Please note these funds are constantly under review and we recommend checking the individual funders' websites regularly for the latest information and updates.

### **Arts Council England**

Arts Council England are the national development agency for creativity and culture. They invest public money from Government and The National Lottery to help support the sector.

### **Asda Foundation**

The Asda Foundation supports small grassroots groups at the heart of communities. They work closely with in-store Asda Community Champions to understand the needs of the people living and working locally in the communities surrounding Asda stores and fund vital community projects.

### **Ballinger Charitable Trust**

Ballinger Charitable Trust give grants to charitable causes working with younger and/or older people in the North East.

### **BBC Children in Need**

BBC Children in Need is the leading independent funder for children and young people in the UK. Through their grant making and wider work, they aim to create lasting, positive change across the UK for the children and young people who need them most.

### **Believe Housing**

Believe Housing have community funding which supports projects that make a real difference to people's lives and wellbeing. Funding is open to applications from projects within the areas Believe Housing operates in County Durham.

### **Bernard Sunley Foundation**

Bernard Sunley Foundation is a family grant-making foundation which supports charities in England and Wales. They have four funding categories: Community, Education, Health and Social Welfare. Their focus is on capital projects.

### **Coalfields Regeneration Trust**

Coalfields Regeneration Trust has a variety of programmes and funding opportunities in England focused on improving their five key priorities: Community, Health, Skills, Jobs and Climate. Their programmes and funding are delivered in their eligible coalfield areas which include some areas of County Durham.

### **Comic Relief**

Comic Relief's vision is to create a just world free from poverty. They make grants with attention on these key areas: alleviating poverty's consequences and grip on people's daily lives, tackling the injustices that keep people in poverty, and standing with those in poverty who are most harmed by climate change.

## **Community Foundation North East**

Community Foundation North East award grants to support a wide range of causes across North East England. The grants come from different funds set up by their donors. You can apply as an organisation or as an individual.

## **Easyfundraising**

Easyfundraising turns everyday online shopping into free donations for your cause. Start your online shopping first at easyfundraising then shop as normal. Retailers will then make a small donation to say thank you; there are over 8,000 brands involved in the scheme.

## **Esmée Fairbairn Foundation**

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation is one of the UK's largest independent funders. They aim to improve the natural world, secure a fairer future and strengthen the bonds in communities in the UK. They offer grants and social investment.

## **Forte Charitable Foundation**

Forte Charitable Foundation are a grant making foundation giving grants to small and medium sized local organisations in the UK with a demonstrable track record of success working to address local issues in communities of extreme urban deprivation and deprived rural districts.

## **Garfield Weston Foundation**

The Garfield Weston Foundation is a family founded grant-maker that gives money to support a wide range of charities across the UK that make a positive difference working in different sectors. These include welfare, youth, community, environment, education, health, arts, heritage and faith.

## **Greggs Foundation**

Greggs Foundation is a grant-making charity which aims to build stronger and healthier communities in the areas served by Greggs. They offer grant programmes which work to address three key challenges facing local communities: addressing issues of poverty and inequality, ensuring food is at the heart of communities and supporting local community organisations to make a real difference.

## **Hadrian Trust**

Hadrian Trust aims to improve the lives of people living and working in the North East of England. Their main grant donations are in the fields of social welfare, youth, disability, the elderly, ethnic minorities education, arts, and the environment.

## **Henry Smith Foundation**

The Henry Smith Foundation is an independent grant making trust who aim to use their resources to help people and communities at a time of need and to bring about positive change. They have a range of grant programmes available.

### **Karbon Homes**

Karbon Homes have a Community Investment Fund and welcome applications from not-for-profit organisations and schools. The grants aim to support projects that make a real difference to people's lives and wellbeing within the communities in which they work.

### **Key Fund**

Key Fund provide social investment to organisations, enabling growth and sustainability for communities most in need. They provide flexible loans and grants to help enterprises start up, become sustainable and grow.

### **Livin**

Livin are a housing provider that has community funding for projects that will help tenants and the communities they live in. They are particularly interested in projects that will help with financial inclusion and making communities healthier, safer, greener and more sustainable.

### **Lloyds Bank Foundation**

Lloyds Bank Foundation invest in people who are furthest from being in a good place and the people who do the work to change that. They aim to build capacity and capability to drive change within communities everywhere across the UK by providing resources, money, time, tools and connections.

### **National Lottery Community Fund**

The National Lottery Community Fund awards money raised by National Lottery players to fund great ideas that help communities to thrive. They have a range of funding programmes and offer different amounts of funding depending upon your project.

### **National Lottery Heritage Fund**

The National Lottery Heritage Fund provide different levels of funding to heritage of all shapes and sizes. Their grants range from £10,000 up to £10 million.

### **Northstar Ventures**

Northstar Ventures provide early-stage venture capital and impact investments to entrepreneurs with big ideas. They have a range of funds and programmes available.

### **Point North**

Point North is a local grant-making foundation that awards grants from the many funds established by their donors to try to make a lasting difference in local communities. They do this by matching your application wherever they can to the most appropriate fund available at the time. They provide grants for groups, individuals and families in need.

### **Sir James Knott Trust**

Sir James Knott Trust support charitable activity in Tyne & Wear, Northumberland, County Durham and Hartlepool by making grants to organisations. They operate on a rolling programme.

## Sport England

Sport England invest National Lottery and public money to help people play sport and take part in physical activity. They have a range of funding programmes available.

## The Clothworkers Foundation

The Clothworkers' Foundation improves the lives of people and communities – particularly those facing disadvantage and marginalization – through grant-making. The Foundation awards capital grants to charities registered in the UK or not-for-profit organisations working across their ten areas of priority defined in its Open Grants programmes.

## The Joicey Trust

This trust makes grants within North East England including the DH1 – DH9 postcodes in County Durham. Grants are made across a wide spectrum for either revenue (including 'core funding') or capital expenditure.

## Training and Events

Durham Community Action offer a range of fully funded online training workshops including a 'Completing a Funding Application – Bring your Project to Life session which covers understanding the basics of applying for grant funding and how to link your project to a funder's criterion. Visit our [Training](#) webpage to find out more.

## Funding Searches

Durham County Council manage a funding portal called [Durham4Community](#) for community groups which you can sign up to for free. It allows you to search for funding schemes available to your group, apply for funding and get advice on producing your funding application.

## Durham Community Action Funding Top Tips

Before starting your application, please read through our 'top tips' to make sure that you have all of the information you need and that you have a plan before you contact them.

1. **Always check the funder's exclusions list**
2. **Make sure you meet the funder's priorities/criteria**
3. **Be clear and concise**
4. **Only provide information you have been asked for** Most funders will ask for your governing document and bank account details
5. **Be clear about why your project is needed and who will benefit from it**
6. **Know your outcomes and what difference your project will make**
7. **Provide an accurate budget**
8. **Complete application forms fully and accurately**
9. **Get someone else to read your application before you send it**
10. **Meet funders deadlines and timescales**

## How Durham Community Action can help

Durham Community Action will support in any way we can in order to help organisations access the funding and advice they need. We are happy to talk through funding opportunities and help shape applications alongside our usual funding advice which includes our 'Critical Friend' service where we will read through your application before you submit it to make sure it is clear and concise.

## Further Support Available

Our friendly staff at Durham Community are here to provide information, advice and guidance so don't hesitate to get in touch!

Email: [info@durhamcommunityaction.org.uk](mailto:info@durhamcommunityaction.org.uk)

Website: [www.durhamcommunityaction.org.uk](http://www.durhamcommunityaction.org.uk)

