

Grantmaking guidance

What you need to know about our grantmaking

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What kind of funder are we?

We are a place-based funder supporting not-for-profit community groups and organisations in Essex, Southend and Thurrock. We want to respond to your commitment and connection to the communities you support, providing a funding relationship which is helpful and enabling. We want to give you the opportunity to do the work that you know is needed, building on the community's assets. We aim to be flexible, to support a wide variety of organisations and sizes, with a special interest in grassroots groups and those working with marginalised and historically underrepresented communities.

We look to build a strong and trusting relationship enabling you to provide the maximum impact and benefit to your communities. Our application process is kept as simple and accessible as possible, and we do provide alternative ways to apply if required. Through listening and building relationships, we hope to give you the opportunity to think about your requirements and produce an application that focuses on the needs of your group and the people you are working with.

How to keep in touch?

We want to keep in touch with you, so if anything in the guidance is unclear, please give us a call. Our team are friendly, approachable and always keen to hear your ideas. We are always happy to hear about the work you are doing, so please feel free to contact us on 01245 356018 or [book a time slot](#) with one of our grants officers. You can also subscribe to our [newsletter](#) on the website home page. This is the team and you can see who's who, [here](#) on our website.



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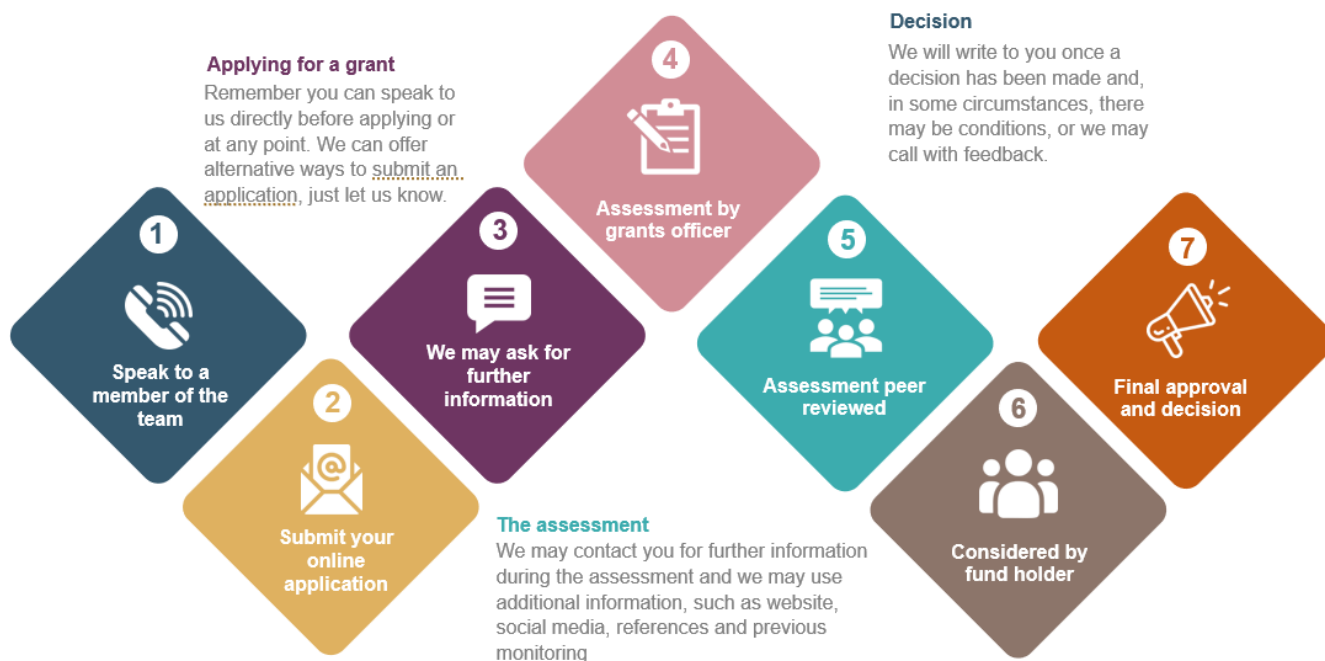
How to apply?

We understand that funding applications can seem a daunting prospect, however we are committed to making it as simple as possible. We have simplified the process a great deal over the last year or so. There is now an easy and brief online form to complete, which asks for basic information about your group. You will also be asked to upload documents: along with the form these make up the application. Please call one of the team if you have any issues with filling out the form and for small community groups, we can provide alternative ways to put in an application.

What is the application journey?

The steps below outline the application process for our general grant-giving, which represents the majority of our grantmaking. Some specific grant programmes may have a different process, but we will provide clear guidance and criteria well in advance in those circumstances. We would always suggest that to ask some outside your group to read your application, if they can understand it, we probably will too. Remember at any point in the process you can call us.

APPLICATION JOURNEY



1. Remember you can always speak to us before you apply or at any point
2. Submit your online application (we can provide alternative ways to apply)
3. One of the team may ask for further documents or clarification if needed
4. The application is assigned to a grants officer for assessment, and they may contact you
5. The assessed grant is then peer reviewed by the grants team
6. The application is then considered by a fund holder and then approved by trustees
7. Final decision is given with any feedback or specific conditions



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What happens during the assessment?

Once we have your application, we check to ensure we have all the relevant documentation, including references if you are new group to us or there is a change in circumstances. We then assign it to a grants officer for assessment. During the assessment we will check,

- Companies House and/or the Charity Commission, which includes directors/trustees, annual report, and accounts.
- Government regulatory organisation (registered organisations) for the latest inspection report.
- Website and social media to understand the work you do, partnership working and engagement with the community
- All appropriate policies are in place, that they are suitable for work outlined in the grant request and that work fits the objective of the group.

The grants officer will write an assessment of 300-350 words using the categories below as a framework commenting on the application; highlighting important information and/or any additional information identified. The assessment will provide an overall impression, including a summary of the organisation and the work, a review of the request, the budget, plus relevant financial information and finally a recommendation. At a weekly peer review, the recommendation will be discussed. At this point the grant applications and assessments are sent to a possible funder or funders for consideration.



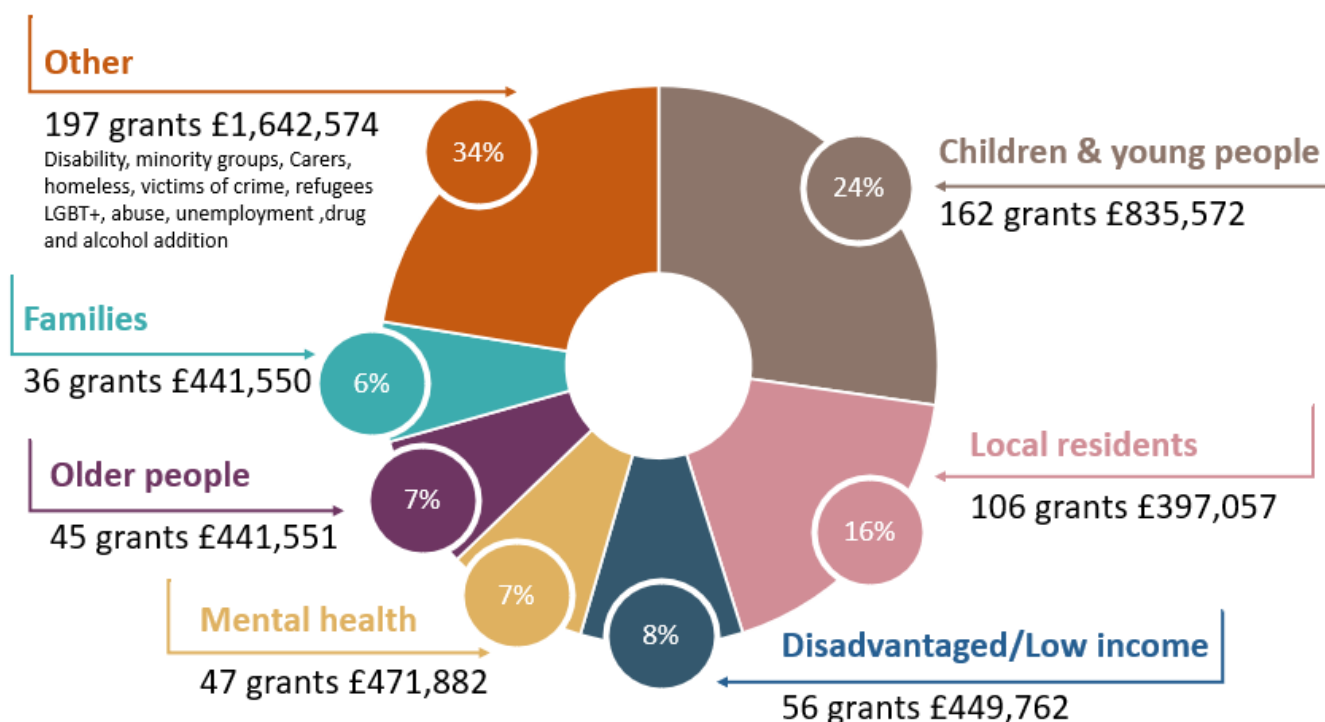
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When to apply and timescales?

For our general grant-giving there are no deadlines as we look to make grants available throughout the year, so you can apply at any time. We do have some funds that do have specific timeframes, and these are publicised on our website and via our newsletter. We will acknowledge your application by email once we have received it, we may ask for more information and aim to give you a decision within 2 months. Again, for some of the funds with specific timeframes the decision process may take a little longer, you can always call us for an update.

What can we fund?

We can fund a wide range of requests from restoration to social justice, which is why we would always encourage groups to give us a call, especially new groups or if you have a new project idea. Many of the funds we have are geographically or thematically restricted so something that we may be able to fund in one area of Essex we would be unable to fund in another part of the county. We would also recommend subscribing for our newsletter and checking our website for updates. Below is a diagram of our grantmaking in 2020/21



How many funds do we have?


We manage over 170 funds, and our role is to assess and match grant applications to possible funders. The majority of funders have 'donor advised funds', which means the donor plays an active role in the decision making. The decisions can be made by panels, staff, members, families, or individuals and in some cases a combination of the above.

The majority of our funds are held by us and are available every year to provide grants. However, we also have some one-off funding opportunities. Generally, you can put in an application at any time and we will look for potential funders, however a small number of our funds and one-off programmes have specific funding windows.



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We would recommend registering for our newsletter to hear about specific funds and check our website for up-to-date information. Below are some examples of our funds and you can see the stories behind our funders [here](#).




FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS

Alastair and Patricia Stewart Charitable Fund

Alastair and Patricia Stewart set up this Fund to support local charities in Essex. Alastair sadly died in February 2022. The link to donate in his memory can be found below.

[Read more](#)




CORPORATES

Essex Rural Fund

The Rural Community Council of Essex (RCC) was set up in 1929 and has actively supported rural communities in the county ever since.

[Read more](#)




FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS

Diana Tinson Fund

Throughout her life, Diana was always helping others, be it sending vitamins to poor communities overseas or volunteering as a counsellor with the Samaritans.

[Read more](#)



CORPORATES

Braintree District and Eastlight Community Fund

Supporting projects that help to either improve health and well-being and help people to live independently, are at the heart of the grants awarded from this fund.

[Read more](#)

Who can we fund?

As a place-based funder we support locally based Essex, Southend and Thurrock groups, however we will fund larger regional or national organisations. They will need to show close links with the area and demonstrate a need which is not currently supported locally. We support all sizes; however, a large number are small grassroots groups, with no paid staff. We do support CICs and other not for profit social enterprises with their charitable activity. Many social enterprises have micro accounts, so we may require further information, such as management accounts, business plans or income and expenditure.

Groups will need a governing document, a governing body of at least three unrelated individuals (no one person with significant control) and a bank account in the group's name with at least two unrelated signatories. We want to see groups demonstrate shared decision making in their governance and display a commitment to engagement with the communities they work with.

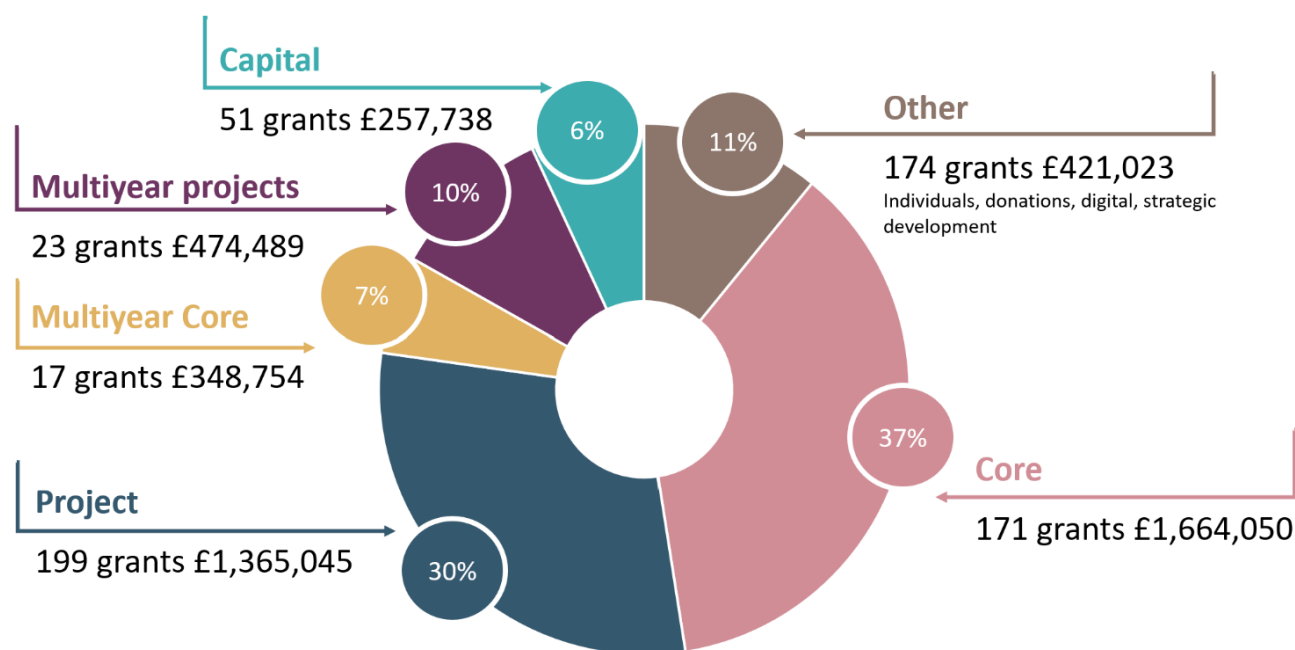


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Do we provide core and multi-years funding?

We are committed to giving grants towards the core activity and your running costs, including services that are critical to the group and would be unlikely to stop, such as rent, staff costs and utility bills. Also core services do change so something that was initially a project may have developed into a core service.

We do have some funds which are designed to award multi-year grants in specific areas or working under specific themes. Awarding a grant across multiple years gives groups space to carry out or develop their work. By reducing the time groups spend on seeking and securing funding, they are better placed to respond to the changing needs in their community. We continue to work with our donors, looking at new ways of increasing our multi-year grant making. The diagram below shows the types of grant we provided, such as, capital, core, and project in 2020/21



How much can we fund?

There is no upper limit, but applicants should be mindful of our average grant size, which for a 'standard' one year grant is £8,755, which represents an average for core cost of £11,076, project £8,956 and capital at £4,974. We always look to fully fund approved applications and on average we met 94% of the amount requested by groups.

If a fund has a specific grant limit and criteria, we will publicise this on our website, social media and via our newsletter. We are also able to identify multiple funds for some grants. However, it is important to remember that some of our funders are geographically and/or thematically restricted, which means the opportunity may vary. It is always best to contact us before making an application, so we can best support you.

Equity, diversity and inclusion?

As a place-based funder we are here for everyone. We recognise, however, that not everyone has the same starting point. Many marginalised and historically underrepresented communities are likely to require a greater need for support. We are committed to work with you to tackle inequalities by listening and learning, and by not tolerating discrimination of any kind.



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Do we fund individuals?

We have a small amount of funding available to support individuals with a focus on help to children and young adults where money is a barrier to them reaching their full potential. In 2020/21 we provided 75 grants to individuals for £97,384, out of our total grantmaking for the year of £4.5 million.



Can you have more than one grant?

The general answer is yes, groups can have more than one grant running at the same time. We will not accept 2 applications at the same time, but groups will have the opportunity to apply throughout the year. A group may have a general grant with us for the year and also apply for a specific fund or one-off opportunity. We will consider the capacity of an organisation to manage multiple grants and also the availability of funds for other activities. We are committed to increase the number of multiyear grants and will take any multiyear grant into consideration if additional grants are requested from our general funds.

If we are funding a group for the first time, in most cases we will wait for the end of grant report before offering the opportunity for another grant. It is important to us that we build a relationship with new groups, which makes up over a fifth of our applications each year.

When can you re-apply?

If you have been unsuccessful with an application, we provide feedback explaining the reasons and groups may apply again providing they are eligible. For example, if a group only has 2 directors, a policy needs reviewing, or one person has significant control. These will need addressing before a new application can be submitted, however please contact us if you have any questions. We would suggest you do not rush to make any changes to your groups governance and get appropriate advice.

In some circumstances we may not have a particular funder available at the time of your application, so we may suggest a more appropriate time to apply when funds may become accessible. In some cases, a group may have high reserves relative to their own reserves policy and this may be taken into consideration by a funder and future applications.

What about safeguarding?

As a funder safeguarding is of the highest importance to us and, where appropriate, we will only consider grants where a group is able to demonstrate that safeguarding is a priority, and that they have adequate safeguarding policies and procedures in place.

