

Inshore and inland rescue boat grant scheme 2015/16: Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the scheme for?

The 5-year, £1 million a year Government grant was announced in November 2014 to support the work of life-saving inshore and inland waterway rescue boat charities operating in the UK, and enhance the UK's incident response capabilities.

Grant funding is available for the purchase of items which will support these charities' lifesaving and rescue operations, including assets and equipment like life rafts, life jackets, through to insurance and training.

2. Who is the scheme for?

The grant scheme is open to all charities registered in the UK which already operate an inland/inshore rescue boat or lifeboats within the UK.

3. What can the charities use the grant funding for?

Applications are invited from inshore/inland rescue boat charities for the purpose of, but not limited to, the purchase of assets, enhancing emergency response capability, maintenance for existing equipment, personal protective equipment and training to support their operations.

4. What is the period for submitting an application?

The window for applications under the 2015/16 scheme year is open from 19 October 2015 until midnight on 30 November 2015.

5. What are the main differences from the 2014/15 scheme?

Although the scheme will be similar to the scheme run in 2014/2015, there are some key differences:

- Applicants should complete and enclose a covering summary sheet and checklist with their bid. A web version of the summary sheet and checklist accompanies the guidance document.
- We have provided additional guidance notes on the detail applicants should include in their applications. Additional guidance is set out in section 2 of the guidance document.
- Grant awards will be distributed in arrears on the presentation of paid invoices for the goods/services which have been purchased using grant funding awarded under this scheme.
- There is an expectation that charities will match fund, or make a funding contribution towards purchases of items or training over the value of £50,000.

6. Is there any guidance available to complete an application?

Guidance on how to apply for funding under inshore and inland rescue boat grant scheme is available from www.gov.uk ("*How to apply for funding under the inshore and inland rescue boat grant scheme: 2015/16 Guidance Notes*").

7. Why hasn't the DfT issued an application form to complete?

Like last year, we have not issued an application form for charities to complete to bid for grant funds. Having sought feedback from people who applied for the funds under the 2014/15 scheme and the expert panel, there were mixed feelings over whether an application would be useful, or hinder charities' flexibility in the way they apply. There were general calls for more extensive guidance on how to apply for funding,

and we have decided this year to provide guidance notes to charities to help them with the application process. We have also provided an application summary sheet and checklist to make sure charities include all the necessary information and meet minimum eligibility criteria.

8. How will applications be decided?

The expert panel has helped develop the application evaluation criteria, which will take into account factors including how the asset or training will be used to support lifesaving, search and rescue operations and flood response capability on a local and national basis; whether there will be wider community benefits; and how the asset and knowledge/skills from training will be sustained into the future.

The expert panel will comprise representatives from the Department for Transport, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, the Royal Yachting Association, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, Defra, and devolved administrations. The expert panel will consider each application individually on merit.

9. How many charities were supported in 2014/15?

The first round of the scheme in 2014/15 attracted around 50 applications, and over £800k was awarded to 21 charitable inshore rescue boat organisations operating in the UK.

Many charities who received grant funding invested in capital equipment (e.g. lifeboats, flood rafts or off road vehicles), which have already been used in rescue operations. Other charities used their grant awards for maintenance of their existing equipment, or the purchasing of new equipment for crews, such as personal protective equipment, and training.

10. What about future years' funding?

While the Government intends, at present, to continue the scheme for further three years, in line with the statement that it will be a five-year scheme, Government spending decisions are reviewed on a regular basis, and we can therefore not commit ourselves to future years' funding beyond the current scheme year at this stage.

11. Is there a minimum/maximum grant awarded per application?

No, there is no minimum or maximum amount per application. The expert panel will consider each application individually on merit and will ensure that funds are distributed fairly and to best effect. The panel may also decide to support parts of a charity's bid rather than the whole bid for funding.

12. Is all £5 million available this year?

No, the total grant fund for 2015/16 is £1 million. While a small proportion of the £1 million each year allocation supports the administration of the scheme, the majority of the funding is available for distribution to eligible charities.

13. Is there an appeal process against a failed application?

There is no appeal process, and the expert panel's decision will be final.

14. What if the charity I represent is unable to offer match funding or contribute towards the purchase of items or training over the value of £50,000?

For purchases of items or training over the value of £50,000, there is an expectation that the charity will offer a contribution, or offer match funding towards the cost of purchase. This is one way to ensure that the charity has a stake in the future success and sustainability of the purchased items or training.

That said, if a charity is genuinely unable to provide a contribution or match fund the cost of purchasing expensive items and otherwise makes a good case for the funds, then exceptions may be made on a case by case basis on consideration by the panel. Each application will be considered on merit.

15. Is one application sufficient per charity for an application including several items or is one application required for each item?

Charities should submit only one application under the 2015/16 round. The application should include all items the charity is seeking grant funds to support under the 2015/2016 scheme year.

16. Can applications seek bids to support activities ongoing maintenance of an asset or refresher training?

Funding under the 2015/16 grant scheme will only be used to support the purchase of training or assets procured and bought during the 2015/16 financial year.

Although we had hoped to consider multi-year grant applications from 2015/16 onwards, the ongoing Government Spending Review means that we are unfortunately unable to consider multi-year applications for the 2015/16 grant round.

Where there is an ongoing cost in maintaining a service or asset, the charity should provide evidence in its application of how it will sustain it in the future: it should not depend on receiving future funding from the Government.

17. How will the government monitor whether the grant received is being used for its intended purposes?

Charities who have been awarded grant funding under the 2015/16 scheme will need to provide proof of purchase of the items which have been awarded funding before grant funds will be paid.

In exceptional circumstances, where grant funds have been awarded in advance of the grant award being paid, the funds will be made with associated terms and conditions. The charity may be liable to pay grants funds back if it is found they have been used for any other purposes than those intended.

18. Will the Government prescribe, name or approve contractors and providers of equipment or services or are charities free to procure equipment and services, and contract with whoever they wish?

No. Individual charities will be responsible for procuring goods or services individually.

19. This year, you are asking for charities awarded grant funds to purchase items up front for reimbursement. What if the charity I represent cannot afford to purchase in advance?

Like many other Government grant schemes, this year's scheme will award grant funds on evidence provided by the charity that it has purchased the items which have been supported by the grant scheme.

However, we understand that this may be particularly difficult for smaller charities in terms of cash flow. Therefore, the panel may agree exceptionally to support an application (or parts of it) where a charity has provided evidence that it cannot genuinely purchase an item, or items in advance of grant funds being made available.

The charity would need to provide assurances in its application that there is a genuine need for advance funding. In particular, we would need confirmation that the charity has adequate safeguards in place to ensure the funding will be spent only the intended purchase. This is usually done through a statement of grant usage form signed by someone in a senior position within the charity, or an auditor. The DfT can provide a copy of this form on request.