



Department for  
Communities and  
Local Government

# The Communities Fund

Prospectus

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# Introduction

1. The Government continues to support public services and community-led projects in order to provide better services and meet the challenges of increased customer demand.
2. In many cases, commissioning services at scale can deliver real savings. However, there is evidence that for people with more complex or demanding issues it is more effective to use neighbourhoods and communities as partners in commissioning and delivering services more locally. This approach encourages greater tailoring and co-production of services, more focus on outcomes that matter to service users, potential efficiencies from joining up local services, and more effective harnessing of assets within the community.
3. We have worked with neighbourhood organisations, parishes and the voluntary sector to help them to play a greater role in service design through projects such as *Our Place*. We have also supported local authorities to assess and implement alternative delivery models through the *Delivering Differently in Neighbourhoods* programme. These both seek to design public services from the bottom up, based around the needs and priorities of communities.
4. Past experience has taught us that effective projects work best when centred on one or more of the following core models:
  - **Community Hubs** – often multi-purpose but focussing on unmet needs in often deprived neighbourhoods. These provide a way to engage with and transform the lives of local residents through face-to-face interaction and intervention.
  - Adopting a **key worker** approach to engage disadvantaged groups to help them join up services in a coherent way which takes account of the individual's own experience and issues.
  - **Social prescription**, where voluntary organisations typically offer a range of activities and opportunities to help health service users become less isolated and active.
5. We are keen that proposals demonstrate how the approach will become self-sustaining and avoid over reliance on grant funding in the future. We will provide a mixture of financial support and advice between now and April 2018.
6. We are therefore inviting joint bids from local authorities/other service providers and community-led groups to send in a bid by 16 January.

7. As an illustration the types of projects, we are interested in please see the following case studies:

**CASE STUDY - ILFRACOMBE**

Ilfracombe, a coastal town in Devon that following support and funding from the Department in 2012 has gone on to develop sustainable community led solutions to a range of problems including; establishing a town team, creating apprenticeships for local young people and co-ordinating health and wellbeing provision to enable people to live independently for longer.

**CASE STUDY – ROCHDALE**

Rochdale's *Kirkholt* project which through close working with the police targets unnecessarily high users of 999 emergency services and provides key worker support to address underlying mental health problems, and offers focused job training and support to access housing.

**CASE STUDY – Somers Town**

Somers Town Community Association, Camden has created a jobs hub coordinating employment and training support for local people. The hub reduces duplication in services and provides tailored support to individuals through language classes, CV writing, IT training or signposting to organisations arranging apprenticeships.

**CASE STUDY – Haxby Road Children's Centre**

Haxby Road Children's Centre has developed an integrated early year model, bringing together different statutory agencies to improve outcomes for disadvantaged children and families apprenticeships.

To read more on the examples mentioned in this note and other Community led projects visit the [MyCommunity website](#).

# What is the Communities Fund?

DCLG will provide funding to local authorities working with community groups to deliver solutions to entrenched social issues for example relating to:

- **Early intervention and high cost individuals** - people falling through gaps in statutory services perhaps because they do not meet *individual* service criteria or thresholds
  - **Adult social care** – for example: tackling social isolation including via community transport schemes; projects aimed at safeguarding vulnerable people including rehabilitation and preventative work around domestic abuse; and/or; work aimed at increasing public health and wellbeing
  - **Children’s Services** – this could, for example, include work around disabled children’s support services or those aimed at helping children from disadvantaged backgrounds
  - **Employment Support** – we are particularly interested in proposals working with those furthest from the labour market and/or where the training is tailored to reflect opportunities in the local employment market and so more likely to result in sustainable outcomes
8. This will be through **£2.5m** funding over the next two years. We invite proposals from local collaborations between local authorities and neighbourhood or community organisations to bid by 16 January. Bids should be for new projects or to extend an existing project into another area but not to prop up an existing approach.

# The programme

9. We will support projects to develop local solutions in specific neighbourhoods, or across a greater area, or even across a local authority or service delivery boundaries. We are seeking projects that bring together the community and local authorities to design and implement services in partnership and so are looking for joint bids. We are keen to work with partnerships who can begin to implement quickly and be underway in 2016/17. We expect to pay for upfront costs and to monitor implementation. Evaluation of the impact of these approaches is an important aspect of this programme so we will expect participating projects to work with us to provide evidence and evaluate progress until 2020.

10. We are seeking bids related to the themes and service areas listed at paragraph one, but will also consider proposals that involve other services where a clear case can be made that it is delivering outcomes which meet a local need.

11. We intend to work with projects in two phases:

Phase 1 – projects that can be implemented quickly (from early 2017). Funding would be provided in the form of a direct grant to a local authority during the 2016/17 financial year. We expect that work would start in 2016/17 and continue until the summer of 2018.

Phase 2 – a much smaller cohort of projects wanting to commence projects early in 2017/18. Support will be provided through a direct grant to a local authority in 2017/18 and we would expect work to be carried out during the remainder of the 2017/18 financial year. This phase will be better suited to proposals that need further work to scope out the aims and partnerships to support the new way of working.

## What we are offering

12. We will provide bespoke support including:

- **Up to approximately £70,000 in grant funding** (this is an indicative figure rather than an absolute); evidence suggests that £70,000 could fund, for example, a project centred on a key worker approach that engages with disadvantaged groups through joining up services
- Access to a panel consisting of officials from the Department for Communities and Local Government, external experts and Local Government representatives who will provide advice, challenge and an opportunity for different projects to exchange learning and network.
- Opportunities for networking and shared learning across projects through events and online forums such as MyCommunity website.
- Help and feedback with Cost Benefit Analysis tools

- Training on previous practice and advice on how to access other funding
- Opportunities to share your work with others.

In return we will require

- A Plan setting out your thinking in plain English that will set your objectives and what your final outcomes will look like and how these will be measured. These will need to reflect the problems you have identified that the project is designed to address
- A Cost Benefit Analysis that identifies the baseline and will continue to track the benefits from the project until 2020.
- An end report that will demonstrate how your project has met its objectives and outcomes and evidence that you are on your way to becoming sustainable.
- A commitment to speak to at least 10 other projects (i.e. through a speaking and peer learning event) to let them hear about your programme.

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# How to bid

13. Projects should submit the bid form attached by 16 January, setting out

- Clear criteria: Specifying the types of social problems you are seeking to address for example: effective employment support for those furthest away from the labour market; tackling social isolation; or; ways to reduce the burden on acute health care or deliver more effective adult social care or mental health support).
- Clear plan: Demonstrating ambition of how many people they will impact upon, show the benefits and have a pathway to project sustainability e.g. we are keen to see how the model will create wider change in the relevant public services.
- Resources: The resources you will commit to the project.
- Strong Partnerships: Demonstrate a commitment from partners and endorsement from at least one statutory provider and a local authority to hold the S31 grant.
- Learning: A clear commitment to share the learning of the project widely and take part in the evaluation to help other areas understand the benefits of your approach is required including peer groups, coaching, guides and learning resources, training and learning events and networking opportunities.

## 14. Time scales

16 January	Deadline for bid
Mid January	Selection panel to look at bid
Start of February	Announcement of successful projects
Mid February	Allocation of grants

Please send any queries and completed bid to

[CommunitiesFund@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:CommunitiesFund@communities.gsi.gov.uk)