



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions

# Questions and answers about the Pathways to Work Innovation Fund

**Government funding to find new ideas  
that support disabled people to work**



**Easy Read  
Summary**

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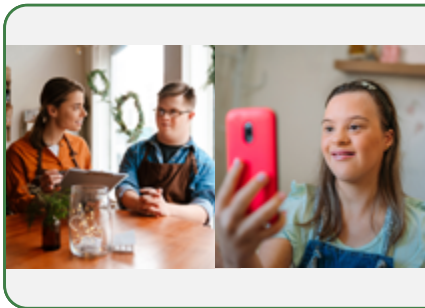


**Please note:** some images in this document have been created using AI and are marked with a star \*

# What's inside?



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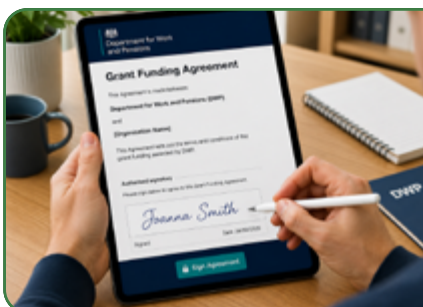
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# Questions about the Pathways to Work Innovation Fund

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This Easy Read document answers questions that you might have about the **Pathways to Work Innovation Fund**, including:



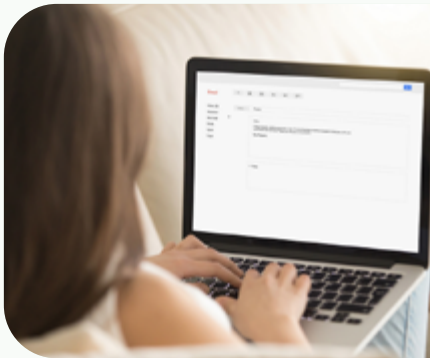


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If you cannot find an answer to your question, please email us at

[dwp.pathwaystoworkinnovationfund@dwp.gov.uk](mailto:dwp.pathwaystoworkinnovationfund@dwp.gov.uk)



You can also write to:

**Pathways to Work Innovation Fund**  
**Ernst & Young**  
**1 More London Place**  
**London SE1 2AF**

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## Who can apply?



**Can someone apply for funding on their own?**

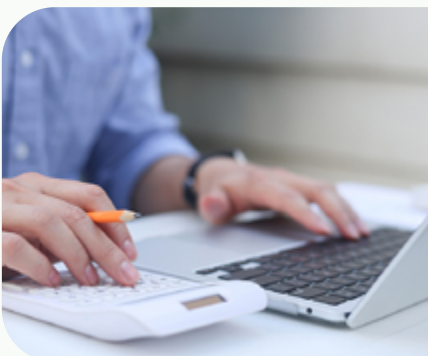
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**No. A person **cannot apply** for funding on their own.**



They can work with an organisation and be part of a funding application.



DWP can support people to find an organisation they can work with.



**Can public organisations apply?**



**Yes.** Councils and some other public organisations can apply.



UK Government departments cannot apply.



**Can organisations work together?**



**Yes.** Two or more organisations can work together as a partnership.



One organisation must be in charge of the application – they are known as the **lead organisation**.



DWP can support organisations and people to find other organisations to work with using the **Partnership Directory**.



**Will DWP check organisations that apply?**



**Yes.** DWP will check organisations to make sure they can get money from the Innovation Fund.



DWP may ask an organisation for more information.



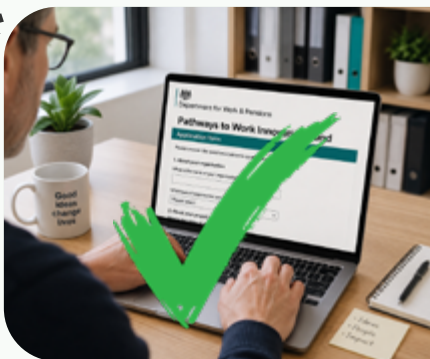
## What type of projects can apply?

\*



**Can an organisation apply for funding when it gets other funding from the DWP?**

\*



**Yes.** An organisation can apply even if it has already received money from another DWP programme.



**Does an organisation need to support disabled people to work before they apply?**



**No.** Organisations can apply for funding even if they **have not supported** disabled people to work in the past.



DWP wants funding applications from lots of different organisations.



The organisation must explain:



- Their idea



- The problem the idea could solve



- How the idea could make things better.



**Does an organisation need to show that its idea can work?**

\*



**No.** The **Innovation Fund** has been set up to pay for projects that will try out new ideas.



DWP understands that some ideas still need to be worked on.



The project should support DWP to learn what works and what does not work.

\*



**What if the organisation needs some funding before the project starts?**

\*



The organisation can ask DWP for a **mobilisation payment**.

\*



This payment helps the organisation to start its project.



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DWP will decide if an organisation needs this payment.

\*



Most of the funding will be paid after organisations have spent money on their projects.

\*



Asking for a **mobilisation payment** does not mean an organisation is less likely to get funding.



**Can a project get funding from somewhere else as well?**

\*



Yes. A project can get money from more than one place.

\*



Your project can be funded by the Innovation Fund **and others** such as the National Lottery.



However, the Innovation Fund **can only pay for** what you plan to do in your new Innovation Fund project



You cannot get funding from others to pay for the same plans funded by the Innovation Fund.



# Innovation



## What does innovation mean?



**Innovation** means doing something new or very different to how things have been done before.



The idea should support disabled people and people with long-term health conditions with work and could be:



- A new service or type of support



- A new way for organisations to work together



- Technology used in a new way



- Trying out an idea in a different part of the UK



- Trying out an idea that is not new with a **different group** of people



The project should also support DWP to learn something new.



**Does a new idea have to use technology?**



**No.** There are lots of different ways for an idea to be new.



**Can an idea be for one place or a community?**



**Yes.** An idea could be for:



- A place



- A community



- A group of people.



A project **does not** have to work across the whole of the UK.



**Does the idea have to be completely new?**



**No.** An organisation could take an idea that has already been used and:



- Use it somewhere new



- Use it with different people



- Make an important change to the idea.



The organisation needs to explain what is new or different about its idea.



**How will the Innovation Fund support disabled people with work?**



DWP wants to **bring down** the difference between the number of disabled and non-disabled people in work.



Projects should support disabled people and people with long-term health conditions to:



- Prepare for work



- Get a job



- Stay in work



- Make progress at work.

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## Applying for funding

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## When can organisations apply?

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Applications open on **28 September 2026**.

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Applications close on **26 October 2026**.



Organisations can start to get their information ready before applications open.

\*



**How long will it take to apply?**

\*



An application for a big project might take longer to complete.

\*



The questions are available before applications open on **28 September 2026**.



This means organisations can start preparing their answers early.



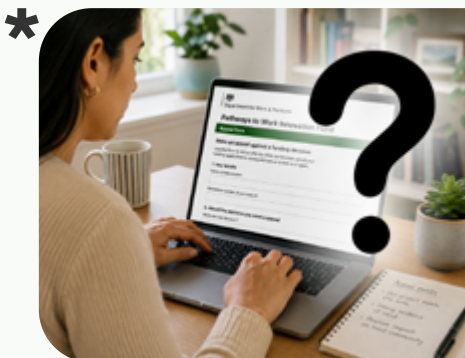
**Can an organisation talk to DWP about its idea before applying?**



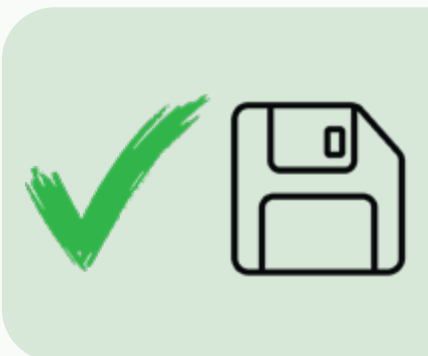
**No.** DWP cannot talk to anyone about their ideas before an application is sent in.



We want to make applying for funding fair for everyone.



**Can an organisation save an application and finish it later?**



**Yes.** The application can be saved before it is sent to DWP.



The organisation can log in again and carry on working on their application.



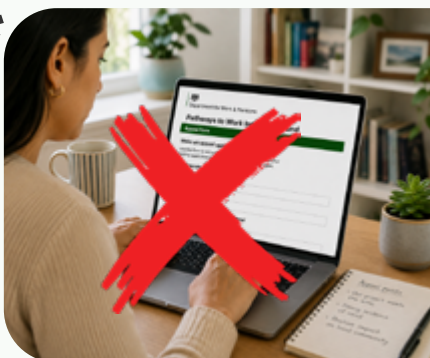
It is a good idea to save the application as you go along and check it carefully before you send it to DWP.

\*



**Can an organisation change its application after it has been sent to DWP?**

\*



**No.** An application cannot be changed after it has been sent to DWP.



If the application is **shortlisted**, the organisation will have the chance to make the application better.



The **shortlist** is a list of projects that **could** get funding.



**What happens if an organisation misses the deadline?**

\*



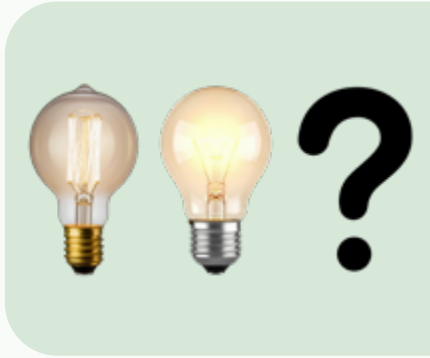
An organisation **cannot** apply online after the final date.



If someone needs an accessible application or **reasonable adjustments**, DWP will support them.

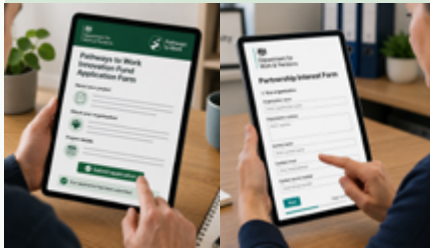


A **reasonable adjustment** is a change that supports a disabled person to take part.



**Can an organisation apply with more than one idea?**

\*



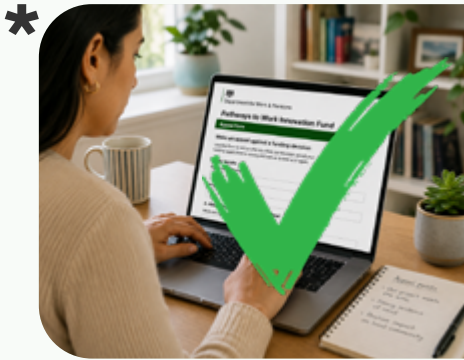
Yes. But it must complete an application for **each idea**.



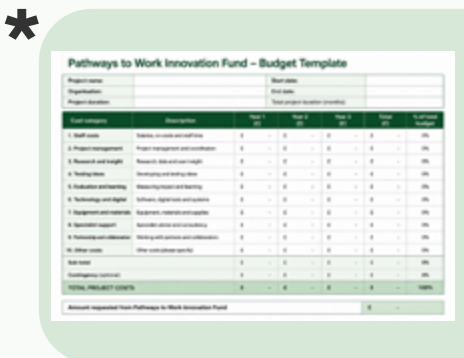
Each idea will be looked at on its own.



## Does an organisation need to send other documents?



Yes. Every application must include:



- **A Budget Template**



- A **Delivery Plan** and **Milestones Template**.



**Milestones** are important steps the project has reached.



Organisations can send up to **three other documents** if they want to.

\*



The documents could include:

- Research about their project
- Proof that their project could make a difference
- Letters of support.



**Do organisations need to join online or in-person sessions?**



**No.** Organisations can go to these sessions but only if they want to.



The sessions are a chance to make ideas better.



People can take part in sessions **online** or **in person**.



**Important information** from the sessions will be shared with everyone else who is applying.

\*



What can the funding pay for?



How much funding can an organisation ask for?

\*



Organisations can apply for **any amount of funding** for their project.

\*



Organisations should ask for the funding they need for their project.



**What can the funding pay for?**

\*



The funding could pay for:



- Staff



- Managing the project



- Research



- Trying out new ideas



- Checking how well the project works



- Technology



- Equipment



- Support by people with a lot of experience



- Working with other organisations.



The organisation must explain what the funding will pay for.

\*



**Can the funding pay for the project to be checked?**



**Yes.** DWP wants organisations to check their projects so that everyone can learn:



- What worked



- What did not work



## How will DWP choose the projects that get funded?



### What will DWP look at?



DWP will look at **six areas**:



1. What problem does the organisation want to solve?



2. What is new or different and how could everyone learn from it?



3. What difference could the project make?



4. Is the project accessible and will it support people's needs?



5. How will the organisation manage the project and work with other people?

\*



6. Is it the right amount of funding and could it make a difference?



## How will DWP shortlist applications?

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DWP will give each area a score from **1 to 5**.

\*



A higher score means the application has more information that DWP is looking for.



More than one person will give the application a score. This should support DWP to make fair decisions.



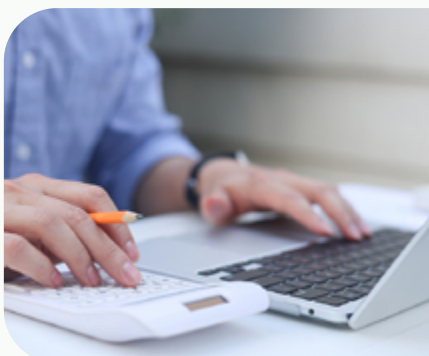
## Getting money from the Innovation Fund



**Who decides which projects get funding?**



DWP will make the final decision and will get advice from:



- People who check the applications



- A group of experts.

\*



**When will organisations find out if their application is successful?**

\*



DWP will start telling organisations from **January 2027** if they have or have not got funding.

\*



If an application is not successful, DWP will explain why.



**Could DWP give an organisation less funding than it asked for?**



**Yes.** DWP might offer **less funding** if:

\*



- There are lots of projects it wants to support



- It thinks some costs are too high



- It does not think some costs are **good value for money**.



**Good value for money** means using public money carefully to get good results.



**When can the project start?**



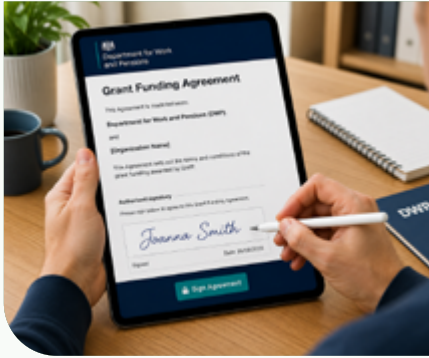
The project can only start after the organisation has signed its **Grant Funding Agreement**.



This is the **agreement** between **DWP** and **the organisation** about the project and its funding.



Most projects should be completed **within 12 months** after the **Grant Funding Agreement** is signed.



# The Grant Funding Agreement



Can organisations ask DWP to change the Grant Funding Agreement?



Organisations should tell DWP as soon as possible if something important changes after they apply.



They should do this **before** the Grant Funding Agreement is signed.



**What happens to the funding when organisations work in partnership?**

\*



DWP will pay the money to the **lead organisation**.



The **lead organisation** will then give funding to the other organisations in their project.



## Checking projects

\*



**How often must organisations tell DWP about their project?**



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Organisations that get funding must send DWP:

\*



- A short update **every month**

\*



- A more detailed report **every three months.**



The detailed report will include information about:

\*



- How much money the project has spent

\*



- Problems or things that could go wrong



- Important steps the project has reached.



## When will organisations get their funding?

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DWP will usually pay the organisation after it has finished part of their plan.



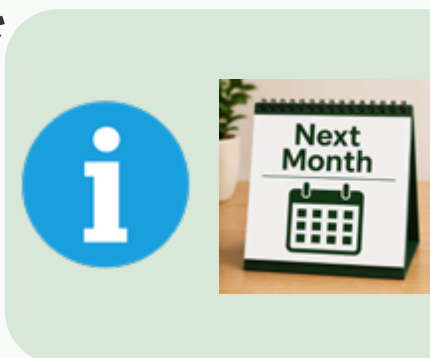
The organisation will need to show DWP that the work has been done.

\*



There can be up to one payment each month.

\*



If information is late or incomplete, the payment might be made the next month.

\*



**What happens if the project is taking longer than planned?**



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The organisation should contact DWP straight away.

\*



**Can a project change after it starts?**



Yes. DWP understands that trying out new ideas can mean that projects need to change.



The organisation must talk to DWP about any changes.



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DWP must agree to the changes before they happen.



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**Will DWP provide support while projects are running?**



**Yes.** Organisations can contact DWP for support either **online** or **by email**.



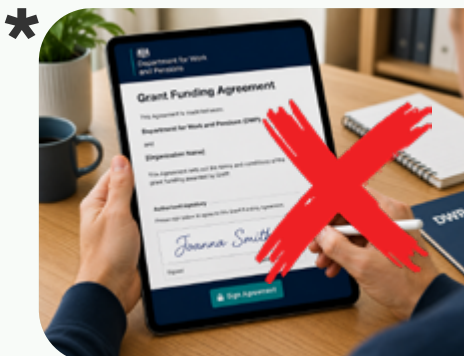
## Can DWP stop or take back the funding?



**Yes.** This could happen if:



- The project is not managed as agreed



- The organisation does not follow the **Grant Funding Agreement**



- The project does not carry out the plan as agreed with DWP.



DWP will support organisations that get funding to make sure their projects are successful.



**Who owns the information that DWP learns from the projects?**



DWP will look at all the projects to find out:



- What worked



- What everyone can learn.



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The information and learning from these projects belongs to DWP.



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**Will DWP publish the applications?**

\*



No. DWP is not going to publish the applications.



## Accessibility



**What if someone needs accessibility support?**



DWP wants the Innovation Fund to be **accessible to everyone.**



Accessible versions of the main information will be available on GOV.UK.



People can also contact DWP if they need **more accessibility support or reasonable adjustments.**



## What accessible versions are available?



The documents 'Your Guide to the Pathways to Work Innovation Fund', 'Applying for the Pathways to Work Innovation Fund' and this 'Questions and Answers' document are available in:



- English



- Welsh



- Easy Read



- British Sign Language

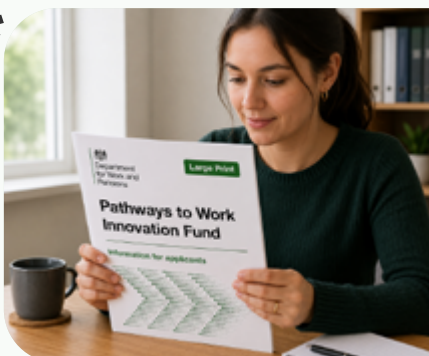


- Braille



- Audio

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- Large print.



DWP online services are accessible,  
and they work with **most screen readers.**



A **screen reader** reads information on a computer or device out loud.



**Sessions to improve your application**

\*



There will be face-to-face **sessions** to help organisations improve their applications in:



- Belfast



- Edinburgh



- Manchester



- London



- Cardiff.



If you cannot go to the in-person sessions there will be **online sessions**.

\*



The online sessions will be held between **28 September** and **26 October**.



Please visit <http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pathways-to-work-innovation-fund> for more information about the in-person and online sessions.