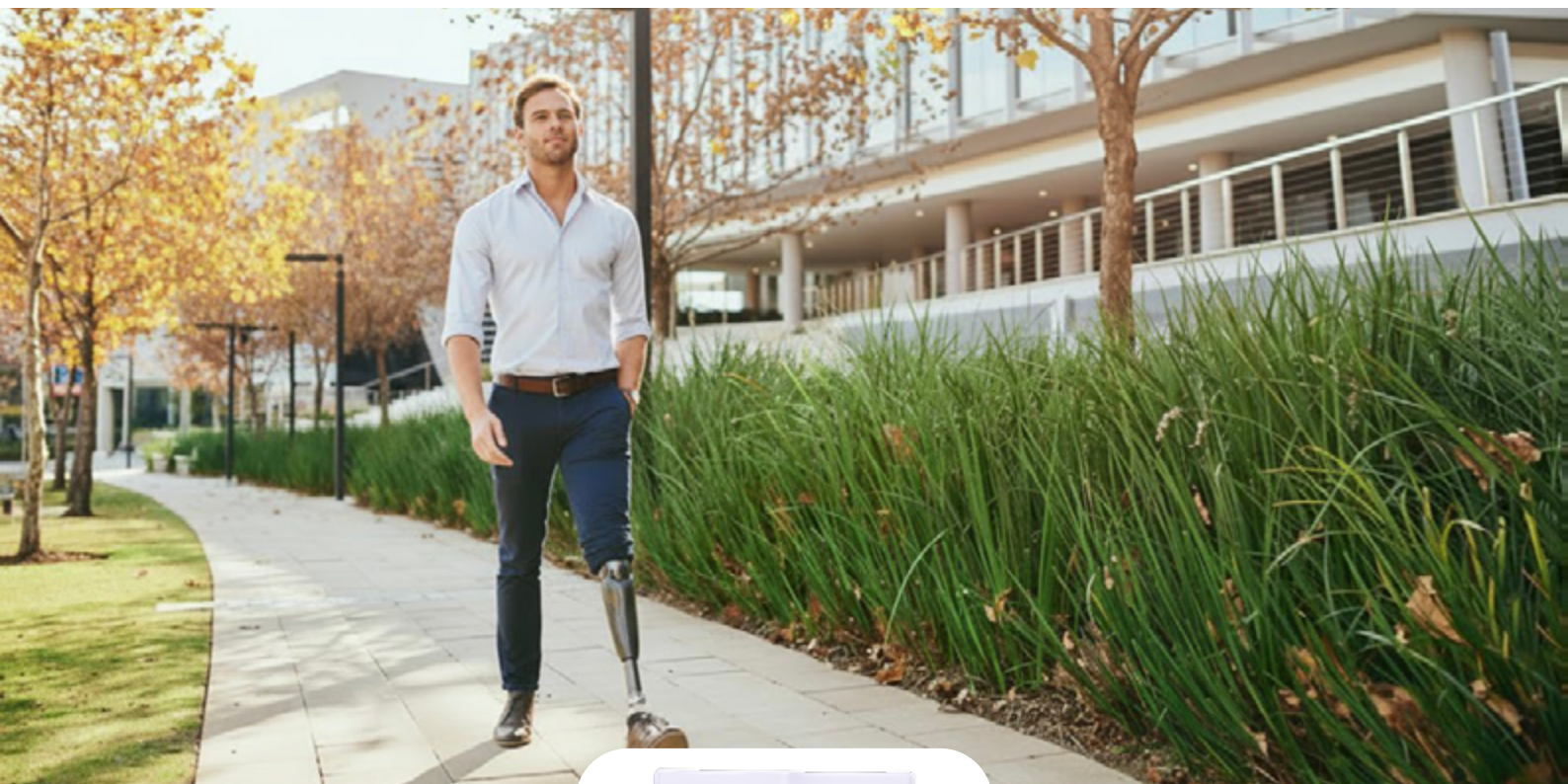




Department
for Work &
Pensions

Your guide to the Pathways to Work Innovation Fund

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



**Easy Read
Summary**

*



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

What's inside?



Introduction

Page 5



A message from Pat McFadden MP, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions

Page 8



What does the Innovation Fund want to achieve?

Page 14



Who can apply?

Page 18



What is innovation?

Page 21



How much money is available?

Page 25



How will we choose projects?

Page 27

*



What kind of projects can be funded?

Page 30



What makes a good idea?

Page 33



Introduction



The Department for Work and Pensions has a big plan called Pathways to Work.

You can read the main document using this link
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pathways-to-work-innovation-fund>



The **Pathways to Work Innovation Fund** will support disabled people and people with long-term health conditions to work.

*



A **fund** is money that is available to pay for different types of work or projects.



The **Pathways to Work Innovation Fund** will give money to different organisations to try out new ideas.



The new ideas should support disabled people and people with long-term health conditions with work.



This Easy Read document tells you:



- About the Pathways to Work Innovation Fund

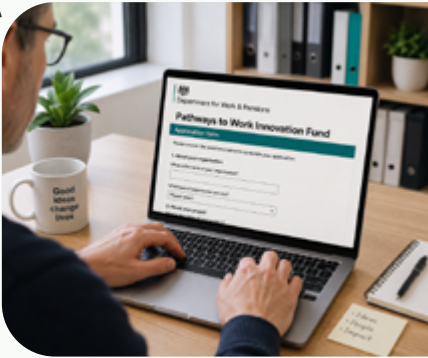


- Who it is for



- What kind of ideas it could pay for

*



- Who can apply for funding



- What support is available



- How DWP chooses which ideas to support.



A message from Pat McFadden MP Secretary of State for Work and Pensions



“Too many disabled people and people with long-term health conditions face barriers to work.”



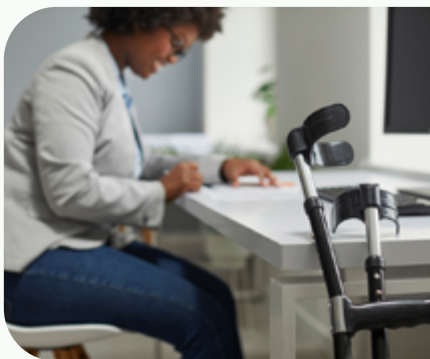
A **barrier** is something that makes it difficult for someone to do something.



We want to support disabled people and people with long-term health conditions to:



- Find a job



- Stay in work



- Make progress at work.



Pathways to Work will bring together support for **work, health** and **skills**.



We want people to get the right support



We also want to try out new ideas for supporting people.



This is why we have set up the **Pathways to Work Innovation Fund**.



There is up to **sixty million pounds** available for new ideas over **two years**.



We want to find out what works well.



Some ideas might work, but some will not.



We can still learn from ideas that do not work.



We want organisations across the UK to tell us about their ideas.



Together, we can create better work opportunities for disabled people and people with long-term health conditions.



Pathways to Work aims to:



- Make it easier to get support



- Give people more support that meets their needs.



This support should help people reach their goals for work.



It should also support people to overcome barriers to work.



What does the Innovation Fund want to achieve?

*



Innovation Fund projects must support people with **at least** one of these four things.



1. Prepare for work



Supporting someone to **get ready for work**.



For example, someone might get **new skills** or support to make it easier for them to start work.



2. Get a job



Offering someone the support they need to get a job.



3. Stay in work



Giving someone the support they need to keep the job that is right for them.



4. Make progress at work



Supporting someone to make progress at work could mean they:



- Learn new skills



- Take on new tasks or projects



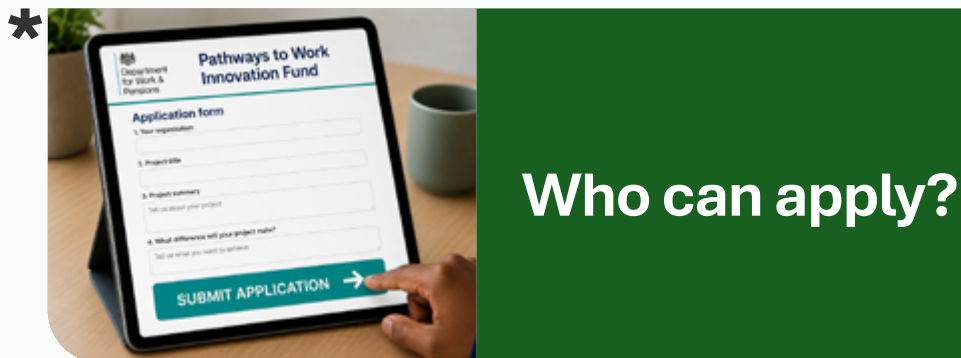
- Move to a better job.



We want to learn from all the projects we fund and find out which ideas work well.



Ideas that work well could support more people around the UK.



Different organisations across the UK can apply, including:



- Charities and voluntary organisations



- Social enterprises – organisations that put their profits back into the business



- Businesses



- Universities and research organisations



- Councils and other public organisations.



Organisations can apply for funding on their own or work together in a **partnership**.



A **partnership** is when **two or more** organisations or people work together on a project.

*



The **lead organisation** submits the application and manages the grant.

*



One person **cannot apply** for funding **on their own**.



People and organisations must agree how they would work together in a **partnership**.

*



DWP will make a **Partnership Directory** available for people and organisations who are seeking partners.



What is Innovation?



Innovation is about doing something new or very different to how things have been done before.



Your **new ideas** must support disabled people or people with long-term health conditions with work.



There are many different types of **innovation**, such as:



- A new way to use technology



- A new service or type of support



- A new product or tool



- A new way for different organisations to work together



- An idea that already exists but is used in a very different way.



It could also be a new way for employers to support disabled people and people with long-term health conditions.

*



The **Innovation Fund** is not for organisations to carry on offering the same service.



There needs to be something important that is **new** or **different**.



There also needs to be something useful that we can learn from the project.



Trying new ideas sometimes means you need to **take a risk**.



Not every new idea will work as planned. This does not mean the project has failed.



We can learn from finding out **what does not work** as well as **what does work**.

*



What we learn could help to make services better in the future.



How much money is available?

*



The first round of funding is up to **ten million pounds** which opens in **September 2026**.

*



There is **up to fifty million pounds** available in the second funding round in early **2027**.



Organisations can ask for a **small** or **large** amount of money.

*



Organisations should only ask for the money they need for their project.



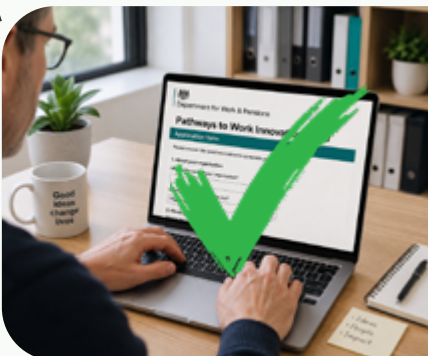
Most projects should be completed **within 12 months.**



Funding is available until **31 March 2028.**



Organisations of different sizes and types can apply.



You can apply even if you have never applied for government funding before.



DWP is interested in **good ideas** and the difference they could make.



How will we choose projects?



We will look carefully at each application and:



- How new or different the project is



- If the project could make things better for disabled people and people with long-term health conditions



- What could be learned from the project.

*



- If the idea could be used by **more organisations** in the future



- How much **money** the organisation needs.



The project must offer **good value for money**.



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

*



We are not more likely to choose a project:



- If you ask for **more** money



- If you ask for **less** money.



The amount of money should be right for the project.



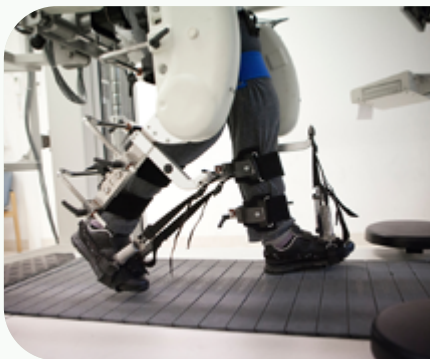
What kind of projects can be funded?



The money can be used to try out new ideas, for example the cost of:



- New technology or equipment



- New items, services or tools



- Trying out new types of support



- Carrying out research with people who could use the service



- People working together to create a new service



- Staff and volunteers working together



- People taking part in the project



- Support from people with a lot of experience and skills



- Organisations working closely together in a partnership



- Checking how well the project works.



The money must be used for the project.



Organisations need to explain how they will spend the money.



What makes a good idea?



A **good application** should explain **the problem** it wants to put right.



The organisation should **understand** the people it wants to support.



It should explain what is **new** or **different** about the project.



It should explain how the project will **make a difference**.



The organisation should show how it could **make the project work**.



The organisation should also explain what it **would like to learn**.



The project should be **accessible** and **include everyone** from the start.



The organisation should **think** about the needs of disabled people and people with long-term health conditions.



People with a **lived experience** should work closely with everyone on the project.



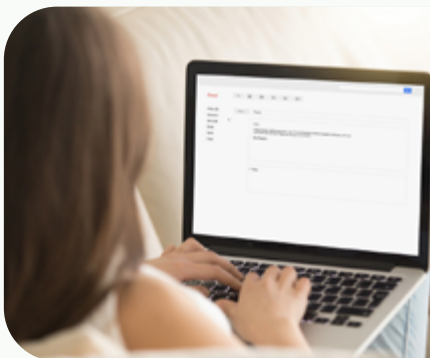
Lived experience means having a personal experience of something, for example, a disability.



The organisation should show how it has listened to people's experiences and needs.



The organisation should also explain how its project is **accessible** to disabled people and people with long-term health conditions.



If you would like to find out more about how to apply for DWP Pathways to Work Innovation Fund please email us at:

dwp.pathwaystoworkinnovationfund@dwp.gov.uk



You could also write to:

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