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# RAISE Challenge Fund Guidance

We are delighted to have opened the RAISE Challenge Fund to support aspirational thinking and initiative in voluntary sector activity in the South East.

Through the Fund we want to help groups and organisations to achieve greater results for their local communities by supporting them to grow, develop and overcome barriers. We want to see innovation, good ideas, creative thinking, resourcefulness and possibly some considered risk taking.

RAISE is working in partnership with the Community Foundation for Surrey (CFS) to deliver the Fund. CFS will manage the application and awards process for the Fund, although final decisions on grants awarded will remain with a panel comprising trustees from the RAISE Board and CFS. RAISE will work together with CFS to evaluate the Fund and to draw out lessons from the programme.

This document tells you what you all you need to know in order to apply.

**In this guidance document you will find the following information:**

- 1. Overview of the Fund**
- 2. Key dates and deadlines**
- 3. 'Grants Plus' support**
- 4. Capturing the learning**
- 5. The Expression of Interest**
- 6. Making an application**
- 7. Terms and Conditions**



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## 1. Overview of the Fund

### Aims

The aim of the Fund is to enable **significant change** to occur in the **capability** of a voluntary group or charitable organisation. This change must result in **demonstrated benefits** being **delivered** by the group or organisation to the individuals or communities they support.

“**Capability**” could be an enhancement in skills or knowledge of the group, it could mean an increased reach, scaling up or across, diversifying services, building collaborations to deliver efficiency, strengthening a group’s own structures and processes (e.g. formalising a group into an organisation), strengthening an organisation’s reputation or connections. The Fund aims to “unlock” potential in groups or organisations, to support good ideas, aspirational thinking and initiative.

The total value of the Fund is £125,000. Of this we seek to award around half of the grants in the £2,500 - £5,000 range and around half the grants in the £8,000 - £10,000 range. These are not, however, strict funding bands, and there is flexibility in the amounts to be awarded so we ask all applicants to cost their plans accurately.

### Demonstrating Change

Successful applicants to the Fund will need to be able to demonstrate at the application stage the change they are seeking to make; how their group or organisation will be different as a result of the grant. They will also need to articulate what results that change will have on the individuals or communities they support (“beneficiaries”), and be able to show how they will measure those anticipated results at the end of the grant period. As part of the grants application process the RAISE staff team is able to help groups or organisations analyse and articulate both the change they want to make, and the expected results of that change.

The Fund is keen to support groups and organisations (large and small) that may struggle to find funding elsewhere; in that sense we want to take some risks in the grants awarded. We also want to achieve a very high success rate of applications (so that the majority of applicants are awarded grants). For this reason we will accept applications by invitation only, following an initial screening of Expressions of Interest. RAISE staff can provide support to groups invited to apply, to help them develop a strong application which meets the Fund criteria.

### Geographic Area

RAISE was established to support the voluntary sector in the South East of England and the Fund will award grants to activity supporting individuals or communities within that region, i.e. Bucks, Berks, Oxfordshire, Hampshire, Southampton, Portsmouth, Isle of Wight, Surrey, East and West Sussex, Brighton and Hove, Kent and Medway. If a group or organisation operates in a wider or different geographical area it must show clearly in its application how the grant will be used only to benefit communities in the South East of England as defined above.



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This Fund is not seeking end-to-end projects to be delivered in the period of the grant (which is relatively short). If a short term project can be shown to deliver significant change in a group's capability then it will be eligible, but so will more general development activity, which may be part of a longer term process of change within a group or organisation.

We do not want groups to re-invent existing projects or services as "brand new projects" for funding, and the Fund will not normally support ongoing running costs, *unless* they can demonstrate that this will result in a significant change in capability for the organisation which results in greater benefits to communities.



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## 2. Key dates and deadlines

<b>Expression of Interest</b>	<p><b>Open for submission: 13<sup>th</sup> March</b> <b>Last date for submission: 31<sup>st</sup> May</b></p> <p>You may submit your EOI at any point during this period. The EOI is designed to save you time and provide us with a little more information about your funding needs prior to making a full application.</p> <p>You will be notified by CFS whether you have satisfied the initial EOI stage within 2-3 weeks of submitting your EOI.</p>
<b>Applications: by invitation only</b>	<p><b>Submission deadlines: we anticipate closing the application process at the end of July. You will be notified if this changes.</b></p> <p><b>Please don't leave your application until the deadline. Equal amounts of funding will be awarded by the Panel at each of its three meetings, so there is no benefit in postponing your application if you are ready to go!</b></p> <p>If you have satisfied the EOI stage you will be invited by CFS to submit a full application. You will be sent an application form and details of your named Partnership Manager.</p> <p>Once your application form has been received, an email acknowledging receipt of your application will be sent to you by CFS.</p>
<b>Assessment of applications</b>	<p><b>Applications will be considered by a Panel comprising trustees from CFS and the fund holder RAISE. The panel will meet three times.</b></p> <p>Your application will be assessed against the RAISE Challenge Fund funding criteria. Where appropriate, we will contact you to obtain any further information or arrange a site visit.</p>
<b>Awards</b>	<p><b>Awards will be made after of three Panel meetings.</b></p> <p>CFS will notify successful applicants. Your named Partnership Manager will be in touch to discuss arrangements for additional support where applicable.</p> <p>Unsuccessful applicants will also be notified by CFS.</p>
<b>Activity monitoring</b>	<p><b>July – December.</b></p> <p>Your RAISE Partnership Manager will work with you to capture the learning in line with pre-agreed evaluation and monitoring activities.</p>



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### 3. RAISE Challenge Fund ‘Grants Plus’ support

In addition to awarding grant funding we are also offering an optional support package to applicants before, during and after the application process. We want this partnership approach to grant making to underpin the entire programme.

Prior to applying, all prospective applicants will have the opportunity of speaking informally with a RAISE ‘Partnership Manager’ to chat through ideas or seek clarification. As the application advances, the Partnership Manager will be available as a resource, if desired, to provide further input or suggestions. Some examples of what the Grants Plus support might look like are provided in the box below.

Partnership Managers are available to provide support and guidance where needed and it is recognised that this will vary according to need and previous experience.

#### Examples of Grant Plus support

**Note:** This is NOT a fixed menu of support - please talk to your Partnership Manager about your own needs

- **Signposting and making initial introductions** - for example identifying local organisations which can provide legal advice on human resource issues; introducing the organisation to the local voluntary sector support organisations.
- **One to one meetings to provide advice/coaching to address a specific need** – for example a one to one meeting to discuss best practice approaches to managing the project.
- **Subject-specific presentations or tutorials, where an area of expertise lies within the RAISE team** – for example a one-off presentation on gathering and analysing data; an introduction to measuring impact.
- **Hands on support** – for example facilitating a half day planning session, chairing a meeting where a neutral voice is needed.

### 4. Capturing the Learning

We also want to learn about how effective the Fund has been in supporting the good work you are already doing. We want to capture the value of the work you have undertaken with the Fund, including what has worked well and what you would change.

As such all successful applicants will be asked to participate in jointly-negotiated monitoring and evaluation activities. The nature of these activities will be determined on a case by case basis and will be proportional to the size of grant.

The Partnership Manager will be able to provide support and guidance on the best methods of capturing the learning throughout the grant period and beyond.



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## 5. The Expression of Interest

The Expression of Interest (EOI) stage is designed to provide us with a little more information about your proposed activities prior to making a full application.

We are particularly keen to assess the potential added value of your proposed activities, and what makes them different when compared to the activities of other groups or organisations. We also want to get an insight into what change you envisage will result from the grant so we can see what difference it could make.

Your EOI will be considered in detail by RAISE and CFS will also consult with your local Community Foundation. Don't forget that you can request a call back from RAISE to receive support in answering any questions you may have. You can [click here](#) to request one.

### The EOI Form

Before completing your form, make sure you have reviewed the RAISE Challenge Fund Overview on page 2 of this document.

The EOI is an online form and is available via the link below. This will take you directly to the RAISE Challenge Fund page on the CFS website. The form has three short sections:

**Contact details:** your name, email address and telephone number.

**About you:** the name of your organisation and a short explanation of what your organisation does.

**About your funding need:** a set of questions to tell us more about what you plan do with the funding. We need to know specifically what you need the funds for. Tell us about what change we should expect to see as a result of the grant, both in terms of your organisation and the people you work with, as well as those groups and beneficiaries for whom you work.

Some questions take a maximum of 750 characters, which is not much more than 5-6 sentences, or 150 words, so the form is relatively short. We do encourage you to be as succinct as you can, and so please consider this to be a suggested length of response in each case. However if you are unsure, do ask.

Once you have completed your EOI simply click the 'submit' box at the end and this will be sent directly to the CFS grants team. The CFS grants team will aim to get back to you within 2-3 weeks to advise you as to whether you are invited to make a full application.

[Click here to access the Expression of Interest form](#)

**Remember, a key feature of the RAISE Challenge Fund is the optional support that is available to help you throughout the application process, as well as beyond into the grant period. If you have a query, no matter how small, or, if you are still not clear about how to answer some of the questions in the EOI, don't hesitate to get in touch via the link below. We will be delighted to answer your questions. We want to support you and to learn with you.**

[Click here to request a call back from RAISE](#)



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## 6. Making an application

Applications are received by invitation only and upon satisfactory completion of an Expression of Interest form. You should hear whether you have been successful within 2-3 weeks of submitting your Expression of Interest. If you have satisfied the EOI stage you will be invited by CFS to submit a full application. You will be sent an application form and further guidance along with the details of your named RAISE Partnership Manager.

## 7. Terms and Conditions

Funding is not available for:

- Unspecified expenditure for general appeals or fund raising events/activities;
- Organisations which have significant financial reserves or are requesting funding towards reserves;
- Costs which are already incurred or items purchased prior to/during an application;
- Political activities;
- Statutory organisations such as schools cannot apply unless the project is over and above their statutory responsibilities and the application is able to demonstrate working in partnership with local communities.

In part B of the application form you are asked to make a declaration and sign to confirm that you understand the condition of the grant. The conditions are as follows:

- That any grant is awarded on the basis of the information supplied in your application.
- That if the project/activity changes in any way from the original application, the Community Foundation for Surrey will be notified immediately. I acknowledge that significant variations may result in the grant being altered or withdrawn.
- That you will collaborate with RAISE to capture the learning from your activities and to provide the information required by Community Foundation for Surrey as part of its End of Grant Form monitoring, including evidence of expenditure to account for the full grant awarded.
- That a copy of your organisation's annual accounts for the period be forwarded to Community Foundation for Surrey, and that these will clearly show the grant award from the Community Foundation for Surrey.
- That failure to comply with any of the above conditions will impact on future applications for funding and in serious cases may result in grant monies being reclaimed.