

Better Mental Health Fund

Guidance document

We are launching a round of Mental Health funding, thanks to £210,000 from Oxfordshire County Council and a partnership with West Oxfordshire District Council.

Grants will be made to support the council's vision to prevent poor mental health and cultivate good mental wellbeing for the people of Oxfordshire in their communities.

Target beneficiaries

The grant is intended to benefit the following groups:

- Pregnant women and new mothers, including their families
- Autistic children and young people and their families
- LGBTQ+ young adults
- Men 30-59 years old, especially those experiencing relationship issues

Please note OCF eligibility criteria states that only groups based in Oxfordshire can apply i.e. circa 90% of group's beneficiaries must live within Oxfordshire.

The estimated number of beneficiaries will be considered in the evaluation, alongside value for money.

Desired outcomes

The Mental Health grants support the Council's aims to support better mental health rather than diagnosed mental health issues.

We are seeking grant proposals which deliver these outcomes:

1. Prevent poor mental health and cultivate good mental wellbeing
2. Narrow inequalities in mental health and wellbeing
3. Support community-based activities including peer support, and community support groups

Our commitment

We will provide funding for the most effective initiatives. We are excited to offer full support to applicants throughout the process via drop-in sessions, full guidance, and FAQs to make applying simpler.

Up to 8 organisations will be supported with a grant of around £25,000 to £37,000.

We welcome collaboration between groups on joint or linked proposals.



Eligibility

Applicants must fulfil the following criteria:

- Registered Charity, Charitable Incorporated Organisation, Charitable Company (Limited by Guarantee), Community Interest Company, a Constituted but Unincorporated Club or Association (i.e. it has a constitution but is not one of the other entities listed above)
- Operating in Oxfordshire
- Income under £1 million
- At least one year of operation; if constituted for less than one year but active for longer, evidence should be provided
- Have a bank account in its own name with at least two unrelated signatories, open for three months or more
- Have at least three trustees/committee members/directors who are not related to each other
- Have at least three months' running costs in reserves (if they are more than 12 months, an explanation will be requested)
- Be open to people of all religions and political affiliations, and must not attempt to convert people
- Up to date monitoring and reporting to OCF for any previous grants received from OCF

The following types of applicants are NOT eligible:

- Individuals
- National charities (or financially integrated branches)
- Public bodies or statutory organisations (including parish/town councils) however Parent Teacher Associations or 'Friends of....' organisations may apply provided they meet the criteria above and the funding will be used for activities outside the statutory curriculum e.g. family wellbeing
- Charities where the beneficiaries are solely animals

The following costs ARE eligible:

- Costs incurred from grant award (15 July 2024) until end of August 2026
- Ongoing running costs, including full cost recovery
- Project costs
- Capital costs
- Promotional costs

The following types of costs are NOT eligible:

- Costs which have already been incurred
- Changes to land/buildings which do not belong to the applicant
- Purchase of buses or other vehicles
- Large-scale construction projects (including fixed structures e.g. playgrounds)



Limits on public subsidy:

As these funds are 100% public money, we cannot give a grant to an organisation specifically to fund activities which will be charged to the public and where there is an existing economic market for such activities i.e. there are other providers of such activities currently offering them to the public for a charge and where that organisation has received more than £315,000 (including the value of the grant) from public authorities in the current fiscal year and previous two fiscal years (running 6 April to 5 April).

We do not expect this to be a common issue, based on previous grants rounds. We will use the answers in the questionnaires to identify where this is a possible issue and will be in contact with individual organisations to clarify if required.

Timeline

23rd April 2024 – Applications are open

21st May 2024 (midday) – Deadline to submit applications

15th July 2024 – Funding decisions announced

22nd July 2024 – Deadline for successful applicants to provide required financial and governance evidence

End of August 2024 – Grants paid by this date (contingent on financial and governance evidence being received)

How to apply

- Read this **guidance document** to help you with your application
- Take a look at the [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- **Submit your [application form](#)** from 23rd April to midday on 21st May
- We are able to offer two applicants the option to **apply using video** rather than the online application form. This is a pilot as part of our efforts to make our processes more accessible. Please contact us on ocf@oxfordshire.org or 01865 798666 if you would prefer this approach. We will prioritise requests based on need
- All applications must set out how they would deliver one or more of the three desired outcomes listed above, including what activities they would do
- All applicants must submit an **itemised budget**
- Successful applicants will be required to supply specified documentation showing evidence of good governance to receive funds. This includes **bank account signatories, a bank statement, and accounts** of the most recent financial year (preferably audited). If the most recent year is not yet available, management accounts or income/expenditure documents will be accepted. This must include financial data at least up until 31st March 2024 or more recently
- Successful applicants will be required to provide a **safeguarding policy** to receive funds
- Successful applicants will be required to complete monitoring reports (see details below)



Notes on panel discretion

The panel will use their discretion to reward collaboration between organisations.

The panel will use their discretion to allocate grants to ensure service provision across district council geography.

Monitoring and evaluation

It is important that we can capture the results of any funded applications.

Projects will be asked to collect a range of process measures including the number of sessions, number and demographics of attendees which will be proportional to the size of the Project, in agreement with the Council.

Grant recipients will be required to provide an interim grant report by August 2025 (13 months post-panel) and a final grant report at the end of the delivery of their grant, which must be spent by the end of August 2026. This must include:

- Total number of beneficiaries
- Demographics of beneficiaries
 - Age
 - Ethnicity
 - Gender
 - Disability
 - Caring responsibility (yes/no)
 - Living alone (yes/no)
- Projects will be supported to use the Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scales (SWEMWBS) to track participants anonymously and confidentially **over a minimum of 2 measuring points**. The SWEMWBS consists of the following statements:
 - I've been feeling optimistic about the future
 - I've been feeling useful
 - I've been feeling relaxed
 - I've been dealing with problems well
 - I've been thinking clearly
 - I've been feeling close to other people
 - I've been able to make up my own mind about things
- Projects will also be supported to gather qualitative data capturing detailed personal experience using meaningful measurement and [storytelling evaluation methodology](#) approaches and other techniques as deemed appropriate by the Council, the research partner, and the Project.
- OCF would like to keep in touch with recipients throughout the grant period to support them as any challenges evolve. This would be through a quarterly phone call.



Support and guidance from our team

We want to make your application process as easy as possible. We will be holding some different sessions to help you with your application and to help resolve any issues or questions you may have.

No booking or registration is required, just drop in at the following time:

Launch webinar, 1st May 2-3pm: Sarah Changizi-Cooper, Grants Officer, will talk through the grant and the application process.

[Join the webinar](#)

Meeting ID: 851 2178 8903

Passcode: 336607

Virtual drop-in session, 8th May 2-3pm: The Grants team will be available online between these times for you to ask any specific questions relating to your application.

[Join the virtual drop-in](#)

Meeting ID: 872 3417 9788

Passcode: 647938

In addition, the following one-to-one appointments are available to be booked in advance:

Virtual one-to-one appointment, various times from 29th April to 20th May: Book a 15-minute virtual appointment with Sarah, our Grants Officer if you cannot attend the webinar & drop-in or if you have any further questions on your application.

[Book a one-to-one appointment](#)

Accessibility

We want to make our grant application process as straightforward as possible for everyone and to be fair and equitable to all. We are looking at how we can improve the process for all applicants, and have introduced the following for this grants round:

- Trialling video applications for two applicants who would benefit from this format. Contact our Grants team on 01865 798666 or email ocf@oxfordshire.org if this would be beneficial to you.
- Offering a launch webinar to talk through the application process. This will be recorded and available to view on the [Better Mental Health Fund](#) page of our website after the event.
- Offering online and face-to-face drop-in sessions to answer any individual questions you may have or to help you complete your application form.

Using accessible technology

If you could benefit from additional tools to help you use a PC or laptop more easily, for example if you have need additional vision or hearing needs, [Microsoft](#) have a useful page that provides information on all of the settings and functionality that is available through all Microsoft software (Windows, Microsoft 365).

Translations

Google can be used quite easily to automatically translate our grants webpage and guidance document. It will work best on a Chrome browser. [See advice here](#) on how to set this up.



Alternative ways to apply

If you are finding it hard to complete the online application form due to your accessibility needs, please get in contact to chat to us about how we can help. Depending on the issue you face we may be able to offer a printed application form, a larger print version or a video application process.

If you have any questions about accessibility, please contact our Grants team on 01865 798666 or email ocf@oxfordshire.org

[Apply now >>](#)

