

Frequently asked questions

Community Capacity Autumn 2025

Can we apply if we have applied before?

Yes, absolutely. If you applied before and received a grant, then any new application must be for an activity which was not funded in the previous application.

However, if you received funding under the 12-month spend option and are now applying for a different activity or project, then yes—you are eligible to apply again.

If you received funding and chose the two-year spend option, then you are not eligible to reapply within that two-year funding period.

If you applied previously but were unsuccessful, you are welcome to apply again.

What should the budget and delivery timelines be for Community Capacity grant applications?

We expect to confirm conditional grant awards by 20th November 2025 and funds will be transferred subject to the successful applicants then providing the necessary governance documentation. We cannot fund costs which have already been incurred. Funds need to be spent within 12 or 24 months of the grant award. Assuming the necessary paperwork is quickly provided, the grant could therefore fund costs from mid-December 2025 to 30 November 2026 or 30 November 2027.

We are a part of a larger national charity, but we have an Oxfordshire branch, can we still apply?

If your finances are separate (your own bank account) from the national organisation and you have a local management committee then you can apply. If your finances are integrated into the national organisation, then you cannot apply.

What does the desired outcome 'Development of local community spaces and organisations actually mean?

The development of community spaces and organisations involves not just the creation or refurbishment of these spaces, but also ensuring they are inclusive, accessible, and responsive to the needs of diverse communities. The spaces are designed for public use and to foster social interaction.

Community organisations are typically grassroots, voluntary, or non-profit groups that operate within these spaces or alongside them. Their development includes strengthening their capacity, governance, sustainability, and ability to deliver activities or support to local residents.

Why are you asking about whether we will charge for activities and whether there are other organisations who charge for these activities?

As these funds are 100% public money, we need to be careful about unfairly subsidising activities. 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 your 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. Charging is not necessarily a barrier.

I am a community centre charging 50p for a coffee – do I need to answer yes to both questions about charging?

If these charges are very little and are not for the main activity of your grant proposal, then this will not count as charging, and you can answer “no”. For example, if you are a dementia daycare centre which also offers coffee for a small cost then this will not count as charging, even though there are coffee shops charging for coffee.

I am a community taxi service charging a discounted rate for taxis – do I need to answer yes to both questions about charging?

If the charges are larger and they are for the main activity of your grant proposal, then you would need to answer “yes”. For example, if you charge for a taxi service or counselling sessions, even if this is subsidised. This is because other providers offer the services for a charge.

If your application were successful, we would then ask you to go through an extra process called the Minimal Financial Assistance Notification to confirm whether your 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).

If in doubt, you should answer “yes”, and we will follow up later if necessary. You are also welcome to call us for advice.

How should I answer the question about charging if donations are encouraged for the main activity, but payments are not required?

If there is no contractual demand, then it does not count as a charge, and you can answer “no”.



When the question about charging refers to “the public”, who does this include?

This essentially refers to everyone, including if you are only working with a section of the public. For example, if you charge for a community transport service which is *only* for people referred by social prescribers then this would count as a charge to the public.

Do I need to do extra research to find out if other providers of such activities are offering them to the public for a charge?

If you are reasonably certain that no other providers offering such activities for a charge and no further research is required, then you can answer “no”. If you are not sure then you should err on the side of caution and choose “yes”, and then we can do further research if you are successful with your application.

Does National Lottery funding count as public funding within the £315,000 limit?

Yes, National Lottery funding does count as public money. However, that’s only relevant if you also are charging for the main activity in your grant proposal *and* it is an activity which is also provided by others for a charge.

What is the difference between the Community Capacity fund administered by OCF and the Connected Communities fund administered by OCVA and CFO?

Although the general aims of the two funds are the same, the Connected Communities fund has a specific focus on increasing the number of activities available to people in their communities, primarily for older people though also for adults with additional needs. The fund would not support running costs that aren’t directly associated with providing a regular group activity.

The Community Capacity fund is available for a wider range of interventions such as counselling, digital training or increasing use of green space. It is also open to a broader range of beneficiaries: for vulnerable adults and those experiencing inequality and exclusion, including underserved groups that find it hard to find support through traditional services.

Also, the application requirements are different. Connected Communities fund grants are limited to £5,000 but the process is more flexible with no single deadline and OCVA/CFO provide a package of support alongside the funding. The Community Capacity fund provides grants from £5,000 to £20,000 and there is an application process and deadline of 15 October. NB you cannot apply for both grants.

