

ROUND 5

FALKIRK COMMUNITIES MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING FUND

APPLICANT GUIDANCE





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FALKIRK COMMUNITIES MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING FUND ROUND 5

1. OVERVIEW OF KEY INFORMATION

FUND PURPOSE

All funded projects will have a strong focus on prevention and early intervention in the context of supporting mental health and wellbeing.

All funded projects will have a focus on supporting at least one of the following priorities in the context of supporting mental health and wellbeing:

- Social isolation and loneliness
- Suicide Prevention
- Tackling Poverty and Inequality

All funded projects will have considered and developed an approach to the below in the context of their project and supporting mental health and wellbeing:

- Responding to the ongoing cost of living crisis
- Supporting adults facing socio-economic disadvantage
- Supporting adults from the priority family groups identified in the [Best Start Bright Futures: Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan](#)

The Fund can only support activities for adults (for this Fund, adults are identified as individuals aged 16 and over).

GRANTS AVAILABLE

In Falkirk, there are three grant types eligible for applications:

- Small Grants: up to £2000 for unconstituted groups; up to £5000 for constituted groups
- Medium Grants: up to £10,000
- Large Grants: up to £25,000

Please note you can only make one application per group or organisation, across any of the three grant levels (Small, Medium, or Large).

LENGTH OF PROJECTS

Applications can be for projects for a period of one year or two years

Where a project is for two years, the Small, Medium and Large grant amounts apply to one year: i.e. a Large two year application could be for a maximum value of £50,000, paid in two yearly instalments of £25,000. Applicants seeking funding for Large projects and/or two year projects should expect to provide significant evidence of community need, development and delivery capacity.

DEADLINE

Applications must be submitted via [CVS Falkirk & District's Grant Funding Portal](#) by **12pm, Thursday 2 October 2025**. To support the application process, an offline version of the questions is available on request.

For questions and support, please contact CVS Falkirk & District by email: info@cvsfalkirk.org.uk

NB: YOU SHOULD READ THIS GUIDANCE DOCUMENT IN FULL BEFORE MAKING AN APPLICATION.



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2. BACKGROUND

The Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund for Adults (the Fund) was established in October 2021 and funds community-based projects and activities supporting mental health and wellbeing across Scotland. Thanks to investments from Scottish Government, the Fund has now been delivered four times over four years.

In February 2025, the Fund was chosen by Scottish Government to be part of their [Fairer Funding Pilot](#) which means that for the first time some applicants will be able to make an application for projects and activities that last for a two year period. We still welcome applications for one year projects and it is important to note that the funding must support a mix of project lengths so not all awards will be able to be made for two year projects. This means that the Fund should open again to applications for one year projects around the same time in 2026. Further information on what the Fairer Funding Pilot means for applicants can be found in the guidance below.

CVS Falkirk & District, the Third Sector Interface for the local area, have managed the Fund from the beginning and are pleased to open it again to applications for relevant projects and activities in the Falkirk District area. The level of investment remains the same with around £430,000 available each year to benefit local communities.

3. FUND PRIORITIES AND OUTCOMES

PRIORITY ISSUES

A number of policy drivers (and priority themes and issues) inform the Fund's priorities and intended outcomes which are detailed below for information and reference. However, the core purpose of the Fund, in summary, is to support: **projects and activities delivered by grass roots community groups, to adults aged 16 and over, to tackle mental health inequalities with a strong focus on prevention and early intervention and addressing at least one of the following priority issues: social isolation and loneliness; suicide prevention; poverty and inequality.**

The Fund seeks to contribute to Outcome 4 of the [Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#), and clearly supports the three key areas of focus in the Strategy:

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing for the whole population, improving understanding and tackling stigma, inequality and discrimination
- Prevent mental health issues occurring or escalating and tackle underlying causes, adversities and inequalities wherever possible
- Provide mental health and wellbeing support and care, ensuring people and communities can access the right information, skills, services and opportunities in the right place at the right time, using a person-centred approach

The Fund has an emphasis on responding to the ongoing cost of living crisis and on those facing socio-economic disadvantage, with a particular focus on supporting adults from the six priority family groups identified under [Best Start Bright Futures: Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan](#):

- Lone parent families
- Families with a family member who has a disability
- Families with 3+ children
- Minority Ethnic families
- Families where the youngest child is under 1 year old
- Families where the mother is under 25 years old



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3. FUND PRIORITIES AND OUTCOMES (continued)

PRIORITY ISSUES (CONTINUED)

The Fund also seeks to contribute to the following national outcomes from the [National Performance Framework](#):

- We are healthy and active
- We will live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe
- We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally

PRIORITY GROUPS

The priority groups of people who should benefit from the Fund are listed below and applicants should consider which groups of people they will target, and might benefit most, from their proposed project including what measures they will take to encourage and support these groups to participate. You will be asked in your application to describe your planned approach to making your project or activity as accessible as possible to the intended participants.

Priority Groups include:

- Women (particularly women experiencing gender based violence)
- People with a long term health condition or disability
- People from a Minority Ethnic background
- Refugees and those with no recourse to public funds
- People facing socio-economic disadvantage
- People experiencing severe and multiple disadvantage
- People with diagnosed mental illness
- People affected by psychological trauma (including adverse childhood experiences)
- People who have experienced bereavement or loss
- People disadvantaged by geographical location (particularly remote and rural areas)
- Older people (aged 50 and above)
- People with neurological conditions or learning disabilities, and from neurodiverse communities
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) communities
- Young people aged 16-24

Please note there will also be an 'Other' option where applicants can identify their own local priority group where they are not already listed, applicants should describe how and why they have identified any additional local priority group within their application.

PRIORITY APPLICANTS

Scottish Government clearly state that the Fund should support smaller, local and grass roots community groups and organisations, and that awards made to large and/or national organisations should be by exception only. It is recommended that most, if not all, awards should be made to small to medium sized local groups or organisations with an annual income of less than £1 million.

Any award made to large and/or national organisations, with annual income of over £1 million, is likely to be where they propose to deliver a project or activity that meets a local need or gap that is not, or cannot be, addressed by a local organisation.



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4. APPLYING

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Applications can only be accepted from a range of third sector, voluntary, or 'not for profit' organisations, associations, groups and clubs, or consortiums/partnerships which have a strong community focus for their activities. The range of organisations eligible to apply are:

- Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisations (SCIO)
- Unincorporated Associations
- Companies Limited by Guarantee
- Trusts
- Not-for-profit company or asset locked company or Community Interest Companies (CIC)
- Cooperative and Community Benefit Societies
- Community Councils
- Parent Councils*
- Unconstituted Groups**

*There are some additional eligibility requirements for Parents Councils applying to the Fund, please contact CVS Falkirk & District for further information: info@cvsfalkirk.org.uk

**Unconstituted groups can apply for up to £2,000 only. Please contact us for further support if required, by email: info@cvsfalkirk.org.uk

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

All funded projects and activities will:

- Have a focus on prevention and/or early intervention
- Benefit adults aged 16 years and over in the Falkirk Council area
- Have demonstrated that they are community-based and/or community-led
- Tackle mental health inequalities and support one or more of the Fund's priority issues and priority groups
- Have demonstrated how they will meet the needs of local individuals, groups and communities

The Fund will support a mix of both existing projects in further delivery, and new projects to begin. Any applicant requesting funding to provide additional capacity for an existing project, should detail this in their application.

Projects funded through previous rounds of the Fund are eligible to apply again, but should clearly show in their application how they will develop and improve their approach and where possible, build on their impact from previous rounds. Where an applicant wishes to apply for further funding to support an existing project that is having a significant positive impact, they should provide evidence of this impact to demonstrate the need for further investment.



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4. APPLYING

ELIGIBLE COSTS

Please find lists of costs that can and cannot be funded in the table below:

CAN BE FUNDED	CANNOT BE FUNDED
Equipment	Contingency costs, loans, endowments or interest
Staff costs	Electricity generation and feed-in tariff payment
Volunteer expenses	Political or religious campaigning
Event costs, hall/venue hire	Profit-making or fundraising activities
Training costs	VAT you can reclaim
Transport	Statutory activities
Utilities and running costs*	Overseas travel
Small capital costs**	Alcohol

*Requests to fund utilities and running costs should be proportionate and demonstrably relevant to the eligible project or activity.

**Small capital costs up to £5000 are eligible where they are relevant and appropriate in relation to the project or activity.

Whilst the Fund is not for funding clinical treatment it can, on occasion, be used for specific clinical treatment services, such as counselling or Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) when certain other conditions are met and you should discuss your situation with CVS Falkirk & District before making an application that includes these types of costs.

If you are unsure if any costs in your application are eligible, please get in touch ahead of time to discuss: info@cvsfalkirk.org.uk



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5. ADDITIONAL FUND REQUIREMENTS

FAIR WORK FIRST

Scottish Government's [Fair Work First Guidance](#) directs that groups or organisations in receipt of any public sector grants, contracts or other funding, from Saturday 1 July 2023, MUST pay all staff the Real Living Wage. This requirement DOES now apply to this Fund's successful applicants and will be stated in the Grant Offer Letter issued to all successful applicants.

"All UK-based staff aged 16 and over, including apprentices, who are directly employed by the grant recipient, must be paid at least the Real Living Wage; and any UK-based workers who are not directly employed but are directly engaged in delivering the grant-funded activity, whether they be sub-contractors or agency staff, must also be paid the Real Living Wage." - Scottish Government, 2023

If this is a barrier or challenge for your organisation, please contact CVS Falkirk & District to discuss your situation, by email: info@cvsfalkirk.org.uk

ALISS DIRECTORY

In addition, all successful applicants must add their funded project, service or activity to the [ALISS directory](#), as well as to any active local directories. This requirement will be stated in the Grant Offer Letter issued to all successful applicants.

ALISS is a national directory that allows people to search for health and wellbeing support available to them in their local area. Please note if the project, service or activity ceases to be delivered after the Fund ends, the applicant must also remove the information from ALISS so the information available remains accurate and current.

FAIRER FUNDING PILOT

For the first time, applicants can apply for funding for a two year project, thanks to the support of Scottish Government's [Fairer Funding Pilot](#). Applications for one year projects and activities are still welcomed and a mix of both one year and two year projects will be funded.

Applicants should carefully consider which is the best fit for their project or activity and those hoping to receive funding for a two year project should clearly describe the benefits of the longer delivery period and how they believe the capacity and sustainability of their organisation can support this delivery. They should also expect to provide more detailed information about their organisation's income and funding streams.

It is important to note that Scottish Government have provided the information below in relation to two year awards, and that this caveat will be included in all Grant Offer Letters issued to successful applicants:

"the value of the grant payable in year two is an indicative confirmation and cannot be taken as a guarantee: all indicative funding commitments are subject to the outcome of any spending review by the Scottish Government and approval of the annual Budget Bills by the Scottish Parliament during this period".



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5. ADDITIONAL FUND REQUIREMENTS

DUE DILIGENCE

CVS Falkirk & District complete a number of due diligence processes for all applications to ensure a fair and robust management of the Fund. We ask that applicants provide all of the information requested when submitting their application and respond promptly to request for further information so their application can be processed as soon as is possible. Where applicants do not respond to requests for information we may not be able to process their application and progress it for consideration by the independent funding panels for review, assessment and decision. Some of the information required will be dependent on the individual application however applicants are required to provide at least the following:

- Copy of governing document (unless applicant is an unconstituted group)
- Copy of most recent accounts (in whichever format is appropriate for the applicant's legal structure, unconstituted applicants should instead provide information about how they plan to manage an award if successful)
- Copy of an Adult Safeguarding Policy, Statement or detail on their approach to same
- Copy of a Health and Safety Policy, Statement or detail on their approach to same
- Recent bank statement (if successful)

We understand that some smaller or less experienced groups may need some support to meet these requirements, please get in touch if you need help to provide the relevant documentation and evidence with your application: info@cvsfalkirk.org.uk

6. DATA PROTECTION AND YOUR RIGHTS

CVS Falkirk & District is committed to processing all personal data confidentially and in full compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 (UK GDPR), its privacy statement, and data protection legislation. As the data controller, CVS Falkirk & District processes personal data lawfully, fairly, and transparently for specified purposes, ensuring data is accurate, secure, and retained only as necessary.

In relation to funding applications, CVS Falkirk & District processes personal information under the legal basis of contract. Data provided will be used to process applications (including sharing with the funding panel), for performance monitoring, and for statistical reporting by CVS Falkirk & District, Falkirk Community Planning Partnership, and the Scottish Government. All information is stored securely, retained in line with grant requirements, and will not be shared beyond these purposes except to detect or prevent fraud.

Applicants have the right to access, correct, or request deletion of their personal data. By submitting an application, you confirm you are authorised to do so, that you understand the fund's criteria, and that you consent to CVS Falkirk & District holding and sharing your data as required to manage the grants process, including any personal data provided by third parties with their permission.

For more information or if you have any questions, concerns please contact CVS Falkirk & District's Data Protection Officer: Victoria McRae, by email: victoria@cvsfalkirk.org.uk



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7. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

When you submit your application through the [CVS Falkirk Grant Funding Portal](#) (GFP), you will receive an email confirming we have received your application. All applications are then processed before being reviewed and assessed by an independent local funding panel with a range of appropriate skills and expertise before decisions are made, and applicants are notified of the outcome.

We anticipate receiving a high volume of applications and that we will be able to respond to most applicants with a decision by the end of 2025. We will be unable to respond to individual requests for updates prior to this date. Applicants will receive an email telling them if they have been successful, successful applicants will be issued a Grant Offer Letter to review and sign and their grant can be paid on receipt of their signed Grant Offer Letters and a satisfactory reference.

All applicants should respond swiftly to any requests for additional information or evidence to help us process application as soon as is possible.

We understand it is disappointing for an applicant when their application is unsuccessful however the Fund has been increasingly over-subscribed each year since it started, with the amount of funding available each year staying the same, and we anticipate that this will continue. We offer unsuccessful applicants the opportunity to receive appropriate feedback and get help to find other funds that could be a good fit.

Whilst we are delighted that the Fund has received further investments from Scottish Government for a number of years so far and has been chosen for the Fairer Funding Pilot, we must be clear that there is no confirmation of future funding after the current 'year two' allocation described in this guidance. We strongly encourage all applicants to explore a range of funding streams and income generation methods in addition to this Fund.

8. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Successful applicants will be required to complete a six-week summary report to let us know how their project is progressing, along with a more in-depth end of project report which will include information about the number and types of people who benefited, the overall impact of your project, any significant successes and challenges and a case study or project story. Where it is appropriate, we would also like to see photographs or videos.

Awardees in receipt of a larger grant, or a two year award, should expect to engage with CVS Falkirk & District more regularly and to provide additional, relevant information around the six month mark. All successful applicants are encouraged to keep in touch and to share good news and emerging project impacts, as well as to ask for support with any challenges.

If you have any questions about any aspect of the Fund, please get in touch with the CVS Falkirk & District team before you make your application:

- By phone: 01324 692000
- By email: info@cvsfalkirk.org.uk



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FALKIRK COMMUNITIES MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING FUND ROUND 5

Q. Who will benefit from funded activity?

A. The Fund will help to tackle mental health and wellbeing inequalities and increase community-led support options for adults aged 16 years and over and across Falkirk and District.

Q. Is there a minimum grant we can apply for?

A. There is no minimum grant amount, we understand that small amounts of money can have a big impact on local communities.

Q. What is the maximum grant we can apply for?

A. If you are an unconstituted group the maximum you can apply for is £2,000. Otherwise, the Small Grant maximum is £5,000; the Medium Grant maximum is £10,000; and for Large Grants the maximum is £25,000. This applies to a one year period, the same maximum annual grant applies for each year of a two year application.

Q. When is the deadline for applications?

A. Applications must be submitted online, via [CVS Falkirk's Grant Funding Portal](#), by **12pm, Thursday 2 October 2025**.

Q. When will I receive a decision on my application?

A. We anticipate receiving a high volume of applications and that we will be able to respond to each with a decision by the end of 2025. We will be unable to respond to individual requests for updates prior to this date.

Q. How many applications can we submit?

A. The fund is limited to one application per group or organisation for each round.

Q. Are there any restrictions on which type of organisations can apply?

A. The Fund is only open to third sector organisations – such as voluntary groups, social enterprises, community councils and parent councils. Private enterprises and public bodies cannot apply.

Q. If successful, when must our award be completed and spent by?

A. CVS Falkirk & District must distribute funds for 2026/2027 to successful applicants before Tuesday 31 March 2026. However, based on applicant feedback from previous years, we anticipate decisions will be shared in December 2025 with grants being paid in January 2026.

Funded projects can begin as soon as they receive their grant and should be completed with funding spent by Wednesday 31 March 2027, and end of year reporting submitted shortly afterwards.

Please Note: The above applies to both one year projects and also to year one of two year projects. Applicants delivering two year projects will receive additional information on how their grant will be awarded over that period.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FALKIRK COMMUNITIES MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING FUND ROUND 5

Q. Is the fund for revenue or capital funding?

A. Applicants may request funding for small capital expenditure such as the construction, refurbishment and/or purchase of buildings, amenities or vehicles for up to £5,000 where the benefits of the capital expenditure can demonstrably contribute to the Fund outcomes. This limitation does not apply to the purchase of small items of equipment.

Q. Can a large national organisation apply?

A. The Fund is aimed at smaller, local and grass roots groups and organisations with annual income under £1million. Large and/or national organisations, with annual income of over £1million, are eligible to apply however Scottish Government direct they should be funded by exception and where they can deliver a project or activity that meets a local need or gap that is not, or cannot be, addressed by a local organisation.

Q. How do I apply?

A. Please apply online through the [CVS Falkirk Grant Funding Portal](#) where you will also find a range of resources and information to help you as you develop your application. We can provide you with a copy of the questions if you would like to prepare your application offline in the first instance.

Q. How can I get support to apply to this Fund?

A: CVS Falkirk & District will hold three information sessions on the Fund - where details of the Fund in Falkirk, without jargon, will be shared with plenty time for questions from participants to be answered. Each session will be delivered in a hybrid format so participants can join online or in person at the CVS Falkirk & District office.

Sessions will take place on:

- Friday 29 August, 10-11am
- Monday 1 September, 3-4pm
- Tuesday 2 September, 6-7pm

To receive an invitation to any of the information sessions, please contact Kerrie Hoggan, by email: kerrie.hoggan@cvsfalkirk.org.uk

Alternatively, if you need support outwith these sessions please contact our team by phone: 01324 692000, or email: info@cvsfalkirk.org.uk