

## Reading Community Participation Grants: Guidance Notes for groups

Reading Voluntary Action is pleased to announce this new funding for small community groups in Reading, who are embedded in and providing grass roots support to their communities. We have received £10,000 from Berkshire Community Foundation to distribute in this way and qualifying groups can apply for up to £2,000 each.

### **Why are we distributing these small grants?**

As a small community group, you are providing a vital role in reaching people most at risk in your community, who may not have heard of the wider support in the town such as the Community Hub and mainstream providers. Being directly connected to communities and often helping them to access the services that they need is hugely valuable. There are many residents in our town who do not have access to the internet and for whom literacy and language may be a barrier. Many of these residents are supported by small community groups. RVA values and supports the vital role these community groups play in our town and this funding is directly targeted to help such groups to strengthen what they are already doing to support those most vulnerable in our town.

### **Our funding priorities**

We would like to support small community groups, who work in any or all of the following ways:

1. Run activities that capture the experiences of your community, who are seldom heard 'around the boardroom table', to inform local decision-making around their health and wellbeing
2. Support your neighbours and communities during lockdown; the easing of lockdown and beyond
3. Help your community to access the support they need, when they need it from across the public, voluntary and community sectors

### **Your beneficiaries (Individuals your group is supporting):**

We recognise that certain communities and groups of people have been adversely affected and are experiencing increased disadvantage due to the impact of Coronavirus, therefore we particularly want to fund groups who are embedded in their community and supporting any of the following groups of people:

- Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups;
- Disabled people and those with long term health conditions
- Older people
- People and families experiencing financial hardship
- People experiencing poor mental health and wellbeing

### **Who can apply for this funding? (Eligibility criteria)**

Whilst we recognise that there is an incredible voluntary and community sector in our town and many larger groups and charities need financial support, we have specifically been awarded this sum to distribute to those small community groups, who often do not have the same access to funding opportunities as larger, more established groups and charities, yet are also delivering vital services and support in communities. Therefore, your group will need to fit the following criteria:

1. You are a community group who is embedded within a local community in Reading and your community has been heavily impacted by the effects of Coronavirus. Being embedded in a local community means you are already in contact with and supporting a particular community in some way and you will not need to spend time making those relationships. You will also need to be wide enough to satisfy public benefit and not just benefitting a closed group of friends or family.
2. Your group's work will involve one or more of the priorities above.
3. Your group's work will involve one or more of the beneficiaries above.
4. Your project will be completed by 31 March 2021.
5. Your group's gross annual income is below £10,000.
6. You are applying as a group and not as an individual. You may be a constituted group already or you may need help with this. Please contact Herjeet Randhawa at RVA if you need assistance to formalise your group. You will need to have this before you can apply and Herjeet can help you adopt a constitution and define the roles on your committee (also known as trustees), who are legally responsible for your group. This is important because you are providing services to others.
7. Your group will need to have public liability insurance. However, if you cannot afford this at the moment, you can include this in your application. Contact Herjeet for support.
8. Your group will need to have safeguarding procedures in place and in some cases DBS checks depending on your activities. This is to ensure that you protect those you are helping and everyone is kept free from harm. If you do not have this already, you can include DBS costs and safeguarding training in your application and we can help you to put some basic safeguarding procedures in place. Contact Herjeet for support.
9. Your group will need to have an Equal Opportunities policy to ensure everyone involved in your group can take part and are not unfairly discriminated against. For example, how do you ensure women or those with a disability in your community can take part and have a voice. Contact Herjeet for support.
10. You will need a bank account in the name of your group. However, we recognise that sometimes it can be difficult for small groups to obtain bank accounts so please contact Herjeet for support around this if needed.
11. You can provide a reference from one other group or organisation in the town, who can confirm your group's activities or services.

**Who cannot apply:**

- This funding is not available to social enterprises, businesses, individuals or other profit-making organisations, national organisations or branches.
- If your gross annual income is over £10,000.
- If your group is not embedded in a local community in Reading.

**What can you spend the money on?**

When completing your application, you will be asked to list the costs of your project. You can include:

- Staff costs
- Volunteer expenses
- Training costs for staff or volunteers, including DBS fees

- Equipment needed to run your activities, such as IT equipment, Zoom account, website domain costs.
- Other costs related to running activities, such as refreshments, room hire, printing, public liability or employer's liability insurance.

Please do not include items you have already purchased or received other funding for. If you are unsure, please contact Herjeet to check if you can include an item.

### **How can you apply?**

- Online form available [here](#)
- You can also complete the application form in Word and email this to us. You can find a Word version of the form on the RVA website.
- You will need to submit the following with your application:
  - Last set of accounts
  - Copy of your bank statement for your group

### **Do you need support with your application or any of the above governance?**

If you need help with applying or have any questions about this funding, please contact Herjeet Randhawa, RVA Advice Worker on [herjeet.randhawa@rva.org.uk](mailto:herjeet.randhawa@rva.org.uk) or telephone our main number on 0118 937 2273. One-to-one support is available to all small community groups in Reading for support with this application and a meeting can be set up via telephone or Zoom.

### **Timeline:**

- Deadline for applying – 5pm on 24 July 2020
- Decisions made by the panel and successful applicants notified by 14 August 2020
- Project to be completed by 31 March 2021.

### **The Panel**

The panel will be made up of representatives from Reading Borough Council and two voluntary sector representatives from the One Reading Community Hub. We have chosen these representatives as they have a good understanding and experience of the voluntary and community sector in Reading and to ensure greater transparency. Please note that you should not contact panel members if you need support with your application, but instead please contact Herjeet Randhawa, who will guide you with your applications and will not be involved in any decisions or discussions with the panel about individual applications.

Please note that we have a limited fund to distribute so we may receive more applications than funds available. The decision of the panel will be final and there is no appeal available. If you are unsuccessful in this round, we will do our best to connect you with further funding that may be available for your group.

**Monitoring and evaluating**

Successful applicants will need to set aside time to monitor and evaluate the impact of their project and complete a report at the end of their project. We will also contact you mid-way through your project to see how you are getting on and if you need further support. Successful applicants will receive details on this at the start of their project.

Please keep a copy of your application.

We wish you all the best with your application and thank you for supporting your local communities.