

Hertfordshire User Voice Grant Fund: Empowering people with Learning Disabilities to have their say

Fund Criteria and Guidance for Applicants

Grants available of up to £12,000 to expand or extend existing work. Additional funding options may be considered for organisations covering multiple districts.

Applications can only be accepted from organisations/groups who have the capacity to spend the grant funding within a six-month period or less.

The Hertfordshire User Voice Grant Fund is being funded by Hertfordshire County Council's (HCC) Adult Care Services (ACS) Community and People Wellbeing team and is managed by Hertfordshire Community Foundation (HCF).

Background to the Fund

Grants are available to groups/organisations working in Hertfordshire that support people with a learning disability who either live in the community, or in supported living or care settings.

This grant is being made available through the redistribution of previously allocated Learning Disability funds, so it is not new funding. The Community and People Wellbeing Team aims for this grant to be used within the community to bridge the gap before the Learning Disability User Voice Service provision is commissioned in the summer.

Groups awarded this interim User Voice Grant Fund may also be interested in tendering for the HCC Learning Disability User Voice contract. Those who will be successful in obtaining the User Voice contract are expected to have spent their User Voice grant funds before the commencement of the new Learning Disability User Voice contract to avoid duplication.

The HCC Commissioners involved in the tender will discuss this with the organisations this applies to on a case-by-case basis.

This grant funding is particularly aimed at established organisations/groups working directly with people with a learning disability to enhance or extend existing provision. Groups working solely with carers are not eligible to apply as carers are supported via other HCC funding arrangement.

The aim of the grants programme is to:

- Support people with a learning disability to feel confident in speaking up and in having their voice heard.
- Give people with learning disabilities a voice in relation to the care services they receive or may receive in the future.
- Connect people with learning disabilities encouraging them to build their confidence in expressing themselves and their views.
- Provide innovative and creative activities that empower people with learning disabilities to have their voices heard.
- Provide activities and services that are inclusive of individuals who are 'non-verbal' or have other communication difficulties including the use of different communication styles.
- Provide opportunities for the HCC co-production team to attend activities and hear from people with learning disabilities.

Eligibility: who can apply?

- Registered charities, CIOs, constituted community groups and other charitable organisations including Community Interest Companies limited by guarantee.
- Groups with governing documents that include the group's aims or purpose, objectives and a dissolution clause or asset lock which states what would happen to any funds should the group have to close.
- Organisations must have a minimum of three unrelated Trustees/Directors and two unrelated bank signatories.
- Organisations must be based in Hertfordshire and have been in operation for a minimum of twelve months.
- Groups must have all the relevant policies in place for their work, including Equality and Diversity and Safeguarding policies.

Priority will be given to:

- Established organisations/groups currently working with people with learning disabilities.
- Organisations/groups who are user led/work in co-production or whose service users are empowered to contribute to the organisation's governance, strategy, and activities in a meaningful way.
- Organisations/groups that can cover multiple geographical districts.

Applications are welcome from charities, community and voluntary groups and not for profits of all sizes.

Applications can only be accepted from organisations/groups who have the capacity to spend the grant funding within a six-month period.

The following are not eligible to apply for this grant:

- A Company limited by shares.
- An organisation which cannot demonstrate public benefit as defined by the Charity Commission (for more information visit www.charitycommission.gov.uk)
- Groups and organisations that do not work directly with people with learning disabilities.
- National charities without a Hertfordshire focus.
- Statutory organisations including schools, parish councils and Clinical Commissioning Groups.

What can be funded?

- Staff costs
- Volunteer costs
- Project and activity costs
- Reasonable contribution to core costs

How to apply

Go to the HCF website to start an on-line application. You can keep saving and returning to the application until you are ready to submit it. The application form includes guidance on the questions.

The application deadline is midnight on 5 February 2024. We appreciate this is a short application window. Please do call the grants team on 01701 251351 and ask for Toni Kitchingman or Helen Doubal if you want to discuss your application before you apply or email grants@hertscf.org.uk

Organisations will need to attach or send the required supporting documents which include:

- A copy of the group's constitution or governing documents.
- A copy of the groups most recent annual accounts.
- A list of the names and addresses of trustees or management committee members.
- copies of relevant Equality and Diversity and safeguarding policies.

What are the monitoring requirements?

- Successful applicants will be visited by the HCC Co-Production team to hear from the people you are supporting as part of the User Voice outreach.
- All successful grant recipients will be required to report back on their grant and what has been achieved.
- All funds should be spent and full monitoring received by the agreed date which will be within six months of the grant award. We may ask to see receipts, invoices or other proof of expenditure so you are advised to keep accurate records for the duration of the grants and for at least five years afterwards.
- A link to the HCF monitoring forms and monitoring timeline will be sent to you by email shortly after the grant has been awarded.

Further information

If you want to discuss your application before you submit please call or email the grants team and ask for Toni Kitchingman or Helen Doubal email grants@hertsconf.org.uk or call 01707 251351

January 2024