



## Space to Connect Enhance strand - application guidance

Space to Connect is a partnership between the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DMCS) and the Co-op Foundation. It builds on the commitment to unlock the potential of community spaces as part of the Government's [loneliness strategy](#). It also extends the [Co-op Foundation's existing support](#) for organisations who are working to make community spaces sustainable.

There are two Space to Connect funding strands open for applications. This guidance is for the 'Enhance' strand. Guidance for the other strand, 'Explore', is available [here](#).

The total budget for the 'Enhance' strand is £400,000 and we expect to make around 8 to 12 grants of between £30,000 and £50,000.

The deadline to apply for this strand is **midday on Wednesday 31 July 2019**.

### Quick checklist - is this fund right for you?

The 'Enhance' strand might be suitable for your organisation if you:

- Are already making use of a community space in creative and innovative ways that could be an inspiring example for other communities that want to make better use of local spaces
- Use this space to deliver activities that help people develop their social connections, confidence and skills
- Want to build on your activities in this community space and make them more financially sustainable
- Are working in an area where there are fewer opportunities for people to meet, take part in activities and access services
- Involve members of the community in how your organisation is run
- Actively take steps to include all sections of the local community in your work
- Are a charity, social enterprise or other form of not-for-profit voluntary or community group based in England
- Have a UK bank account in your organisation's name and at least two unconnected people on your board or management committee

If you meet all the criteria listed above, you may be able to apply for a grant of between £30,000 and £50,000 to help you build on your existing work. However, please note the following restrictions:



- The work funded by the grant must take place between October 2019 and March 2020
- No more than 25% of the grant can be used for capital expenditure such as physical assets
- The grant you apply for should not be more than 50% of your organisation's annual income.

## About this funding

Places and spaces for people to come together and enjoy shared interests are vitally important for building stronger communities. These spaces can play an important role in helping people build social connections and address local challenges. The Government's [loneliness strategy](#) recognises the importance of community hubs and spaces to address loneliness and isolation. However, community spaces need regular income so they can continue to meet the needs of people who use them, love them, and rely on them.

If your organisation is already making use of a community space in creative and innovative ways to meet the needs of your community, our funding could help you take the next step to be more financially sustainable in the future.

We're offering grants of between £30,000 and £50,000 to organisations that use a community space for the benefit of local people. This funding is to help expand current activities and embed sustainable ways of working so that your organisation has a secure future. We're looking for outstanding organisations that can be an inspiration to others who are in the early stages of thinking about better use of spaces in their own community.

This funding is only available for work taking place in England. If you are based in another part of the UK and are working to make a community space more sustainable through developing your trading activities, you may be interested in one of the Co-op Foundation's interest-free loan funds:

[Loans for community spaces \(UK-wide\)](#)

[Loans for community spaces \(Wales environment fund\)](#)

## Who can apply?

We can fund UK-based charities, social enterprises and other voluntary and community organisations that do not mainly aim to generate profits for private distribution. Your organisation must be constituted, have a UK bank account in the organisation's name, and at least two unconnected people on the board or management committee.

We can't fund:

- organisations based outside the UK
- individuals or sole traders
- applications made on behalf of another organisation
- organisations aimed at generating profits primarily for private distribution
- organisations that are mainly fundraising bodies or fees for professional fundraisers
- statutory duties
- services run by state or public authorities, unless as part of a partnership led by a voluntary, community or social enterprise organisation.

We welcome applications from organisations working in partnership, including projects joining up with public and / or private sector organisations, provided they are led by a voluntary, community or social enterprise organisation.

Space to Connect Explore Strand guidance notes

## What can you apply for?

The purpose of this funding is for you to build on what you are already delivering so that the community space you use is more sustainable in the future.

This may involve:

- Extending or adding to the community services and activities that you already deliver
- Investing in the core costs of your organisation to free up capacity to engage more fully in planning for sustainability
- Making improvements to your community space so that it can better serve the community now and in the future.

We recommend that you factor into your budget any staff time and other costs that you will spend on evaluating and learning from your work. This will include sharing your learning with an evaluation and learning partner that we will be commissioning to support this fund.

## What can the funding be spent on?

The majority of the funding available is **revenue** funding. This can be spent on things like:

- core costs including staff time
- training and organisational development
- activity costs
- low-value equipment and resources to help with projects and activities
- technical and professional fees and consultancy
- low-value equipment and resources for improvements to community spaces such as paint, soft furnishings etc.

Up to 25% of your grant can be allocated to **capital** spending.

By capital spending, we mean funds used to acquire, upgrade, and maintain physical assets such as property, vehicles, technology, high value furniture or equipment, which will have a useful life of more than one year. The value of these items will be included on your organisation's balance sheet.

If you would like to use any of your funding for capital spending, you will need to secure competitive quotes on all purchases, keep a record of any assets acquired or improved with the funding, and may be subject to additional conditions.

However, there is no requirement to use any of the funding as capital. You may apply for the full amount as revenue funding.

## Things we can't fund

- New members of staff who have not yet been recruited (this is because recruitment does not always go to plan and can take longer than expected, and the work delivered through this funding must be complete by 31 March 2020)
- Any political or religious activities, although we can fund religious organisations if they are providing benefit for the wider community
- Purchase of buildings or land

- Retrospective payment for projects or work that has already happened
- Costs that you expect to be reimbursed later from any other funding source
- Interest payments or service charge payments
- Work delivered outside of England.

## **What we're looking for**

Organisations applying to this fund should already use or run a community space. Applications which meet this essential requirement will then be assessed against the following criteria.

### Inspiring spaces

We want to support community spaces that could be an inspiring example for other communities, by highlighting innovative ways which communities are able to make better use of different local spaces. This funding should help to make your use of space more financially sustainable in the future, so the whole community can continue to access and enjoy it in the long term.

### Under-served places

We want to fund organisations that are delivering something for the community in places where there are fewer opportunities for people to meet, socialise, take part in activities and access services. For example, places where services and activities are difficult or expensive to travel to, or where community activities and events are not affordable for many people. These are likely to be areas where people are affected by deprivation and isolation.

You'll need to show that you understand your community well and that your work responds to local needs and priorities. If you like, you can refer to sources of data such as [Co-op's Community Wellbeing Index](#) or the [English Index of Multiple Deprivation](#) to show how your organisation is responding to issues in your local community, as well as how you draw on its strengths.

### Community involvement

You'll need to demonstrate how your organisation involves community members in decisions about how your community space is run, and what activities and services it offers. You should also show a willingness to co-operate with other local organisations to make best use of community spaces, share learning and avoid duplication.

### Diversity, inclusion and representation

We want to fund organisations that are open and welcoming to all, and are representative of the local communities they serve. We will look for evidence that you are taking active steps to make sure that all sections of the community can engage with your organisation and its activities.

### Connecting and empowering people

We want to support community spaces which help to connect and empower people through the activities that take place in them. You should show us how people using your community space will build stronger social relationships, a sense of belonging in their community, and increased confidence and skills.

## **What can you expect when you apply?**

Applications open on **Friday 28 June** and close at **midday (12pm) on Wednesday 31 July**.

The information you submit will be reviewed by the Co-op Foundation team, who will decide if your project is something we could fund. If it is, we will assess it against the criteria described above.

We will shortlist those applications that best meet our criteria and share them with other reviewers, including Co-op stakeholders, Government departments and independent experts. From this review process, recommendations will be made to the Co-op Foundation Board of Trustees, who will make final decisions in September 2019.

If your application is shortlisted, you may be asked to provide additional information about your organisation, to help us carry out checks before we confirm that you have been awarded a grant.

If you're successful, we'll let you know by email in mid-September, and then you will receive a grant offer letter and terms and conditions of the grant from us.

If you're unsuccessful, you'll get an email from us letting you know the decision.

Activities delivered through this funding should start in October 2019 and must be completed by the end of March 2020.

If you have any questions about this funding, you can [get in touch](#).

## **How to apply**

If this fund sounds like it's a good fit for your organisation, you can [apply here](#).