



Space to Connect Explore strand - application guidance

Introduction

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 'Explore' strand. Guidance for the other strand, 'Enhance', is available [here](#).

The total budget for the 'Explore' strand is £480,000 and we are offering grants of up to £10,000.

There is also the potential for organisations who secure Explore grants to apply for further funding to continue this work.

The deadline to apply for this strand is midday on Monday 12 August 2019.

Quick checklist - is this fund right for you?

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

- Have a realistic plan to engage the community in conversations about better use of spaces to support social connections
- Are seen as credible and trusted by local people
- 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 up to £10,000 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



- The grant you apply for should not be more than 50% of your organisation's annual income
- None of the funding available through this strand can be used for capital spending

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, many communities face a lack of easily accessible space for people to meet, socialise and access support.

If your organisation is interested in exploring opportunities for better use of local spaces, our funding could help start those early conversations to see what could work in your community.

We're offering grants of up to £10,000 to organisations that are interested in exploring potential for better use of spaces in their community. This funding is to help identify local challenges that could be addressed through better use of spaces, such as loneliness, health, community cohesion and access to services. It could also help identify potentially underused spaces, and opportunities to make better use of them to meet local needs and priorities.

This funding is only available for work taking place in England.

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 organisation.

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

What can you apply for?

The purpose of this funding is for you to engage the community in a conversation about how spaces could be better used to address local needs and priorities.

This may involve:

- Holding community meetings and workshops

- Carrying out community engagement work
- Bringing together local decision-makers and other stakeholders to respond to issues and priorities raised through community engagement
- Identifying potentially underused spaces and exploring the feasibility of making them more available for community use.

We will be commissioning an evaluation and learning partner for this fund who may be able to share examples of best practice with you, and will be interested in hearing about your learning as you progress with your project.

What can the funding be spent on?

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

- Core costs including staff time
- Activity costs including low value equipment and resources
- Workshops
- Venue hire

Things we can't fund

- New members of staff who have not yet been recruited. Recruitment does not always go to plan and can take longer than expected. Any activities using this funding must be spent by March 2020.
- Any political activities or religious activity, although we are able to 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
- Any 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.

What we're looking for

Applicants to this strand should be a trusted local organisation with a realistic plan to engage people in exploring how local spaces could be better used to meet community needs. Applications which meet these essential requirements will then be assessed against the following criteria.

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 it is run, and what activities and services it offers.

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.

What can you expect when you apply?

Applications open on **Friday 28 June** and close at **midday (12pm) on Monday 12 August**.

After the closing date, we will shortlist the applications that best meet our criteria.

We will let all applicants know the outcome of their application by the end of September. If you're successful, you will then receive a grant offer letter from us with terms and conditions.

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

If you have any questions about this fund, 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](#).