

Community Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund for Adults

2026 – 2027 (Year 6)



Background of the fund

The Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund for Adults (the Fund) was established in October 2021 and to date has distributed £99 million to community initiatives supporting mental health and wellbeing across Scotland. Funding for Year 6 (£15 million) was announced in March 2025 as part of the Fairer Funding for the Third Sector Pilot Project.

The Pilot was set up to provide more certainty and allow for longer-term planning, aiming to improve stability and cost-efficiency for organisations (in this case TSIs) and services. The original Pilot was announced in March 2025 with £15 million committed in each of the 2 years 2025-26 and 2026-27. To find out more about the Fairer Funding Pilot, please [click here](#)

The overarching aim of the Fund is to:

Support community-based initiatives that promote and develop good mental health and wellbeing and/or mitigate and protect against the impact of distress and mental ill health within the adult population (aged 16 or over), with a particular focus on prevention and early intervention. Specifically, it aims to:

1. Tackle mental health inequalities through supporting a range of 'at risk' groups.
2. Address priority issues of social isolation and loneliness, suicide prevention and poverty and inequality with a particular emphasis on responding to the cost of living crisis and support to those facing socio-economic disadvantage.
3. Support small 'grass roots' community groups and organisations to deliver such activities.
4. Provide opportunities for people to connect with each other, build trusted relationships and revitalise communities.

The Fund has a strong focus on prevention and early intervention and aims to support grassroots community groups in tackling mental health inequalities and addressing priority issues of:

- social isolation and loneliness;
- suicide prevention; and
- tackling poverty and inequality

There will be a continued emphasis in Year 6 on responding to the ongoing cost of living crisis and on those facing socio-economic disadvantage, with local priorities identified as:

- Suicide Prevention
- Befriending (including one to one befriending/group befriending)
- Friendship/Social Connections
- Address the Cost of Living (whole family poverty/ mitigating child poverty)
- Additional Support Needs activities/services (16+)

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.

Specifically, the intended outcomes of the Fund remain the same as in previous years, and are to:

- Develop a culture of mental wellbeing and prevention within local communities and across Scotland with improved awareness of how we can all stay well and help ourselves and others.
- Foster a strategic and preventative approach to improving community mental health.
- Support the resilience of communities and investing in their capacity to develop their own solutions, including through strong local partnerships.
- Tackle the social determinants of mental health by targeting resources and collaborating with other initiatives to tackle poverty and inequality

The Fund within East Renfrewshire

Over the past five years, the Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund for Adults has awarded 162 grants to 92 community groups and organisations across East Renfrewshire, with a total investment of £1,233,950.34.

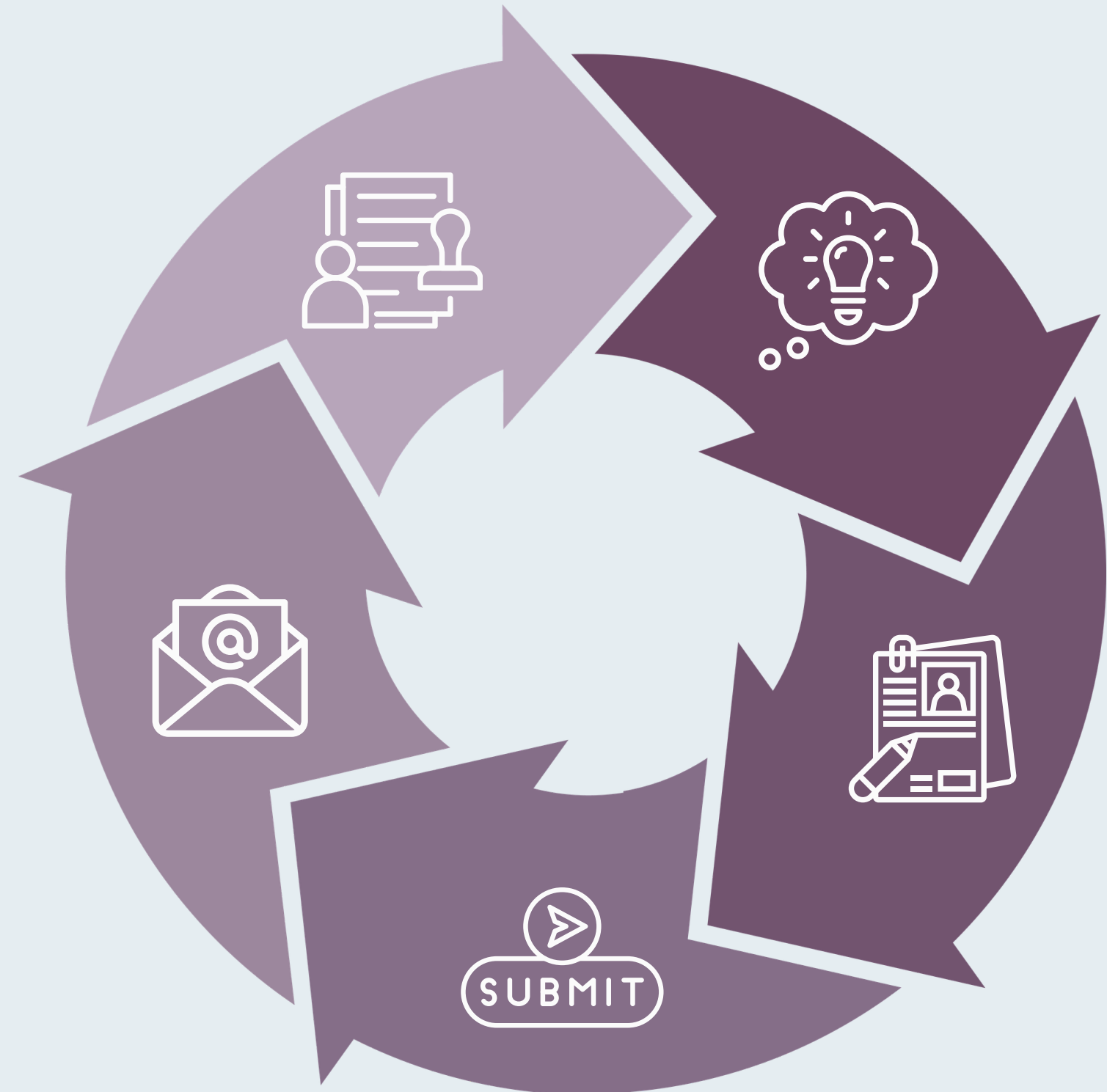
Throughout the lifetime of the fund, Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire SCIO (VAER) has worked to administer and distribute funding to community groups and organisations across East Renfrewshire. For 2026/27, VAER will distribute £234,976.78 to support local mental health and wellbeing initiatives.

In line with the Scottish Government's Fairer Funding Pilot, introduced in 2025/26, a significant proportion of this year's allocation has already been allocated to organisations that secured two-year funding agreements through the 2025/26 funding round. The remaining **£84,043.19** will be distributed through a single-year grant programme to support local community groups and organisations delivering mental health and wellbeing activities for adults.

SMALL GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS

UP TO £2K

- 1 Read the Funding Criteria & Application Guidance
- 2 Fill out an application using MS Forms or the Word Doc Template
- 3 Submit your application
- 4 Send your governing documents and accounts to funding@va-er.org.uk (if applicable)
- 5 You will be notified of the panels decision within 14 working days



PROJECT GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS

UP TO £10K

- 1 Read the Funding Criteria & Application Guidance
- 2 Fill out an application using MS Forms or the Word Doc Template
- 3 Submit your application by the funding deadline (10AM, 27 Aug 2026)
- 4 Send your governing documents and accounts to funding@va-er.org.uk
- 5 You will be notified of the panels decision within 14 working days of the deadline



Who can apply?

The ambition of this Fund is to support initiatives which promote mental health and wellbeing at a small scale, grass roots, community level. We want the fund to be accessible to every community group, no matter how small, new, or inexperienced they may be. National organisations undertaking initiatives in East Renfrewshire are not excluded but are not the main focus of the Fund and may only be funded by exception i.e where local partnership groups identify a need that cannot be met by applications from grass roots, community level organisations.

Organisations applying do not need to have mental health and wellbeing as their sole focus, but, as this is the purpose of this Fund, their application does have to clearly outline how it benefits the mental health and wellbeing of people in their community.

Applications must only be accepted from a range of voluntary, '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 (must be registered with OSCR)
- Trusts
- Unconstituted groups (for small fund)*
- Community Interest Companies (CIC) Limited by Guarantee
- Cooperative and Community Benefit Societies
- Community councils
- Parent councils**

**Continued on the
next page**



*We can consider funding unconstituted groups, either by supporting them to become constituted, or by allowing a constituted entity (that meets criteria above) to hold a grant for the unconstituted group. The TSI as grant giver would require to be satisfied with arrangements in terms of assurance around monitoring and accountability of spend.

**Please note that parent councils are eligible to apply, subject to the following conditions: –

- The funded activities must meet the aims of the Fund and specifically must focus on supporting young people aged 16 or over or supporting adults rather than their children.
- Any Parent Council applying to this fund must have a statutory duty to keep proper accounts, for which there may already be legal and regulatory requirements for them to do so depending on the status of the Parent Council, for example, some parent councils are registered with OSCR as a charity

Please note: Organisations/community groups are only able to submit ONE application

What type of project can be funded?

The focus of the Fund is on prevention and early intervention and we would expect all funded projects to focus on one or both of these themes. The focus of the Fund is also on supporting the adult population, which is considered to be members of the population aged 16 and over. Community-based initiatives that promotes and develops good mental health and wellbeing and/or mitigates and protects against the impact of distress and mental ill health within the adult population will be considered.

In addition, funding must be allocated to initiatives that focus on the priority issues outlined previously, including:

- Tackling mental health inequalities, with targeted support for at-risk groups alongside provision for the wider population.
- Addressing social isolation and loneliness, suicide prevention, poverty and inequality, with particular emphasis on mitigating the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis and supporting individuals and communities experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.

VAER recognises that ongoing services delivering strong and demonstrable outcomes may see only modest changes year on year. However, in Year 6 of the fund, there should be a renewed focus on reaching underrepresented and at-risk groups across East Renfrewshire.

Community groups/organisations applying for funding MUST be involved in collaborative work to deliver the project in some form. Low-level collaboration can include:

- **Registering on the Community Hub Directory**
- **Engaging with VAER i.e through contributing to the third sector forum etc**
- **Engaging with Talking Points to establish referral pathways**
- **Sharing experiences via Learning Hub**



Additional Information

The Fund must not be seen as a way to replace other funding streams. Granting funds to projects previously funded through statutory bodies is at TSI discretion, however projects must demonstrate value added relative to statutory provision. This will allow projects that meet the Fund's objectives to be considered, but only granted funding if they can demonstrate clear additionality. For instance, a project adds value by addressing unmet needs beyond statutory provision.

Projects must also have a specific community focus rather than providing regional or national coverage. We ask applicants to declare in their application forms whether they are seeking funding from any other TSI area so that this can be considered by the panels and any relevant connections made.

This fund is not intended to replace funding for direct therapeutic interventions such as counselling or CBT, or to fund treatment focused services/projects. The main intention of this fund is to provide a range of broader community supports that can complement clinical care and is an opportunity to support a wide range of approaches to providing emotional and practical support to individuals (for example peer support practices)

Fair Work Policy

There is a requirement for all grant recipients awarded a public sector grant on or after 1 July 2023 are to pay at least the real Living Wage and provide appropriate channels for effective workers' voice, subject to limits on devolved competence.

All UK-based staff aged 16 and over, including apprentices, whom the grant recipient directly employs, must be paid at least the real Living Wage of £13.45 per hour; 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 at least the real Living Wage.

A key condition is that the real Living Wage policy applies to employers commissioned by grant recipients to deliver an aspect of the grant-funded activity. This means that staff working in the funded community projects should be paid at least the real Living Wage. For more information on the FairWork Policy, please visit: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fair-work-first-guidance-2/pages/9/>

Who should benefit?

- 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 and Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) communities;
- Young people aged 16-24.



What can be funded	What cannot be funded
Equipment	Profit making/fundraising activities
One-off events	VAT you can reclaim
Hall hire for community spaces	Statutory Activities
Staff costs (these should be one off or fixed term)	Day Trips such as to the cinema, or pantomime
Training costs	Electricity generation and feed-in tariff payment
Transport	Contingency costs, loans, endowments or interest
Utilities/running costs	Overseas Travel
Small capital spend up to £5,000. Funding for capital expenditure such as the construction, refurbishment and/or purchase of buildings, amenities or vehicles. The benefits of the capital expenditure must demonstrably contribute to the Fund outcomes. Applicants will not be awarded more than £5,000 for such capital expenditure. This limitation does not apply to the purchase of small items of equipment.	Political or religious campaigning (please note that faith based organisations are eligible to apply with the exclusion of any religious campaigning or activities restricted only to member of the faith based organisation)

Application Process

How to apply

Organisations and Community Groups can apply via our website after reading these Funding Criteria and the accompanying Application Guidance.

Applications can be submitted in one of two ways:

- Microsoft Forms – please note that Microsoft Forms does not have a save-and-return function, so we recommend gathering your information before starting the application.
- Microsoft Word Template – alternatively, you can download our Microsoft Word application template and submit your completed application by email to funding@va-er.org.uk.

Applicants who complete the Microsoft Forms version of the application may also submit one additional A4 supporting document if they wish. This is entirely optional and is intended to provide additional information that may not fit within the word count limits of the online form. Applications will not be disadvantaged if no supporting document is provided.

Funding Deadlines

Small Grants (up to £2,000)

- Applications for Small Grants will open at 12 noon on Friday 17 July 2026 and will be accepted on a rolling basis until all available funding has been allocated.
- Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application within 14 working days of their application being considered by the funding panel.

Project Grants (£2,001–£10,000)

- Applications for Project Grants will open at 12 noon on Friday 17 July 2026 and close at 10:00am sharp on Friday 28 August 2026.
- Please note that a strict 10:00am deadline will be applied, and applications received after this time will not be considered.
- Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application within 14 working days of the closing date, by 17 September 2026.

Grant Conditions

1.Acceptance, Community Directory and Banking Details

Once accepted, grantees must input the details of their projects activities to the Community Hub Directory, they must also sign and return the funding agreement within 14 days of receipt, along with a bank account statement.

2. Evaluation and Monitoring

Grantees are required to undertake an evaluation of their project and submit this to us no later than April 2028.

3. Participation in Learning Hubs

Grantees are required to actively engage with the Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Learning Hubs. Failure to participate may impact eligibility for future funding.

4.Media and Promotion

Grantees will receive a media pack and are required to use it when posting on social media about funded activities.

5.. Midway Review

Grantees will be contacted by Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire (VAER) at the midpoint of each year to review project progress and provide support.

6.Project Changes

Any changes to the original project or budget must be approved in advance by VAER. Do not implement changes without prior consent.

7.Fair Work Policy

Grantees must comply with the Fair Work Policy as detailed in the Funding Criteria.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I apply for more than one project?

No. We ask that all community groups and organisations submit only one application for a single project during the 2026/27 funding round.

If I already have a 2 year funded project, can I apply for a separate single year project?

No. Due to the limited funding available through the Year 6 Fund, organisations that already have a two-year funding award in place are not eligible to apply for additional funding through this round.

When should I apply?

Based on our experience of administering this fund, demand has been exceptionally high each year, with funding rounds consistently oversubscribed. This reflects the significant need for mental health and wellbeing support across our communities. We strongly encourage applicants to submit their applications as early as possible. Applying early allows sufficient time to address any queries, provide any additional information requested, or make amendments before the funding deadline

Who is on the panel?

In East Renfrewshire, the panel consists of individuals from both Public and Third Sector organisations, as well as those who have been selected because of their relevant life experiences. Those on the panel will be responsible for assessing applications and determining their outcome. The panels' decision is final and cannot be overturned, however, applicants are able to reapply provided that it is not the last round of funding available.

If my group/org's application is successful, how long do I have to spend the money?

You will have 12 months from acceptance of the grant to spend the money on the project you outlined in your application.

Frequently Asked Questions

I received money from Year 5 (2025/26) of the community mental health and wellbeing fund, can I apply again?

The Fund can support both new and existing projects. Organisations that received funding through the first five years of the Fund are welcome to apply again. However, applicants must clearly demonstrate how learning from previous funding has informed the project and how the proposed activities will develop, improve, adapt, or expand its impact.

Please note that organisations that received funding through the 2025/26 funding round are not eligible to apply for additional funding until their current funding period has ended. Applications can only be submitted once the one-year funding period has been completed.

If you are unsure when your funding period ends, please get in touch at funding@va-er.org.uk.

Can our group apply if we are unconstituted?

The Fund will consider funding Unconstituted groups, either by supporting them to become constituted, or by supporting a partnership application with a constituted entity (that meets organisational eligibility criteria) holding a grant for the Unconstituted group.

How to Apply

You can apply for this fund by either completing the Word application form or submitting an application online via Microsoft Forms.

Please note that the online application form cannot be saved and returned to later, so you will need to complete and submit it in one session. Once submitted, you will receive a copy of your completed application in Word format for your records.

Before submitting your application, please make sure that all questions have been completed, as we are unable to consider incomplete applications.

If you are completing the Word application form, please email your completed application along with your accounts and governing documents to funding@va-er.org.uk.

If you would like to discuss your idea or need support with your application, please contact funding@va-er.org.uk. We aim to respond to all enquiries within two working days.

Click on the options below to access the application forms:



[Small Grants Application](#)

[Project Grants Application](#)



[Project & Small Grants Application](#)