**One Oldham Fund Medium Grants Programme for Community Centres** **(Up to £25,000) – Guidance Notes**

**Background**

The One Oldham Fund is a strategic single investment fund that uses pooled resources for the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) sector in Oldham. This investment from Oldham Council and Action Together will support the sector’s resilience to enable VCFSE organisations that are locally rooted and active in Oldham to remain viable, and to contribute to the delivery of the [Oldham Plan – Our Future Oldham a Shared Vision for 2030](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/200146/strategies_plans_and_policies/2960/the_oldham_plan_-_our_future_oldham) and [Oldham’s Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2030](https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/sites/actiontogether.org.uk/files/HealthAndWellbeingStrategy.pdf)

**Overall Funding Programme Priorities**

Micro (up to £1000), small (up to £10,000) and medium (up to £25,000) grants have been made available as part of this programme. The overall programme is intended to support projects that have a focus on reducing health inequalities and promoting preventative activity, and meet one or more of the following priorities:

* Diverse opportunities to get together, with regular activities to boost physical and mental health and community spirit.
* Supporting our residents to gain the knowledge and skills to confidently make choices and participate in decisions about their own health.
* Giving children the best start in life.
* A clean green and healthy environment.
* A local area that meets people’s needs and makes them proud.

**What projects can this medium grant be used for?**

The medium grants programme is intended to support Community Centres (defined below) that are or will be identified as key place-based sites to support effective partnership working and delivery of front facing services for residents closer to home as part of Oldham Council’s Place Based Integration programme.

**Key Dates**

* **Deadline for applications** - midday on Monday 11 March 2024
* **Conversations with applicants** – 14, 15 and 19 March 2024
* **Panel meeting** – on or around 27 March 2024
* **Deadline for delivery of project** – any funding must be spent and funded activities delivered by no later than 31 March 2025.

**Who is the funding for?**

You can apply for a grant of more than **£10,000** and up to **£25,000.00** if:

* you are a **Community Centre** based in Oldham; ***and***
* you are a member of Action Together CIO (you can register for free to become a member [here](https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/become-member)); ***and***
* you have at least two people on your board or committee who are not related

Our Oldham definition for a **Community Centre** is an organisation that has **all** of the following features:

* not for Profit (VCFSE).
* incorporated - registered at either Companies House or Charity Commission.
* community led and run.
* based at and occupying a community building that is rooted in a sense of place.
* multiple functions including regular sessions that are open to members of the community without charge and without the need to book in advance.
* unparalleled local knowledge and well established networks and connections into the community they are physically based in.
* a mission to improve the whole of the community and not just a part.

You may not apply for a grant if you are an organisation that can pay profits to directors, shareholders or members.

**Please Note:**

* To receive this funding, any outstanding monitoring information required by us, relating to other grant funding must have been completed.
* Action Together is an accredited Living Wage Funder. This means we encourage organisations that employ staff to become an accredited [Living Wage Employer.](https://www.livingwage.org.uk/become-a-living-wage-employer)
* You may only apply for a One Oldham Fund Medium Grant once
* If you are awarded a medium grant, you may not go on to apply for other grants within our One Oldham Fund Programme during the duration of your medium grant period.
* You may apply for a medium grant if you have already received a One Oldham Fund Micro or Small grant provided it is for a different project or activities or able to demonstrate the need for us to support a continuing project or activities. The panel will however, take any One Oldham Fund grants awarded during the last 12 months into account when making a decision.

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

**We can fund:**

* Your organisation’s running costs
* Small land or refurbishment projects (but make sure you own or lease the land or building or have permission from the owner or landlord that says you're allowed to do work on the building). You may also need planning permission for the work too.
* Equipment
* One-off events
* Staff costs
* Training costs
* Transport
* Volunteer expenses

**We cannot fund:**

* Contingency costs, loans, endowments or interest
* Paying someone to write your bid for you
* Profit making or fundraising activities
* VAT you can reclaim
* Statutory activities
* The reimbursement of money that has been spent
* Projects that have already been started

This list is not exhaustive, so if you are not sure please contact us at funding@actiontogether.org.uk

**Completing the application form**

* Please ensure that **ALL** parts of the application form are completed.
* We have not included word count limits in the application form as we want you to be able to tell us about your ideas without having to worry about the amount of words you are using – as a general guide however we are only looking for brief summary and 2 or 3 paragraphs for each answer should be enough for you to be able to tell us about your plans. You may also wish to send us photos or videos to illustrate your ideas.
* If you have any queries about the application process or would like support to complete the application form or become a member of Action Together, please contact a member of the team at development@actiontogether.org.uk or call 0161 339 2345 and ask to speak to a member of the Oldham Development Team.
* **Please e mail your application by no later than 12 noon on Monday 11 March 2024 to** **funding@actiontogether.org.uk**

**What happens after your application had been submitted?**

* The application form is the first stage of the application process:
	+ We may come back to you and ask you for more detailed information about your project once we are satisfied that you are eligible to apply for this Fund.
	+ The nature of the information requested will be dependent on the nature of your project and activities but may include copies of quotes for larger items of expenditure, evidence of ownership of a building or building owner’s consent and copy planning consent (where necessary) if building works are being carried out.
	+ We may also ask for additional information once a grant has been awarded where capital items have been bought, for example, copies of insurance and MOT documents for vehicles.
* We will also contact you to arrange an informal discussion with you and your Action Together community development worker on 14, 15 or 19 March to discuss the proposed changes or differences that your project will make to those who are involved, any questions that we may have about your project and the additional support that Action Together can offer you as an organisation.
* Eligible applications will be reviewed and decisions made by a panel which includes a range of representatives from the funder and partners from the VCFSE sector on or around 27 March 2024. We aim to notify you of the outcome by email within 2 working-days of the panel’s decision. Action Together will facilitate and act in advisory capacity at the panel meeting but will not participate in the decision making process.

**If you are successful**

We understand that planning a project in such challenging times is difficult and that your plans may need to change to respond to factors outside of your control. If you feel at any point that you are unable to deliver your project as originally planned, then please contact us so that we can discuss any changes that you may wish to make.

To help us understand the impact of this funding, successful applicants will:

* be offered support from one of our community development workers throughout and beyond the project,
* be contacted by us once the project has started, and then at regular intervals for informal check ins about how the project is going,
* be asked to provide a report to Action Together at the end of their project. You will receive an example of the questions that we will be asking with your grant agreement so that you can plan how to capture the story of your project as soon as it starts,
* be expected to be an active participant in our Community Centres Forum; and
* be offered the opportunity to participate in other networks of groups and organisations in order to be able to share expertise and experience.

If you have not recently completed one of our [Health Checks](https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/organisation-health-checks) or you do not already have an up to date [Quality in Action Award](https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/proving-your-impact) from Action Together you will be asked to work towards receiving one with our support as a condition of your grant.

All applicants are asked to provide a copy of their business plan with their application. If you do not have one available or it is not up to date or comprehensive, it will be made a condition of your grant that you will work with Action Together’s development team to develop one.

Depending on the nature of the project or activities, grant payments may be made in stages, and you will be asked to provide a brief report for each payment period before further payments can be made.

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