

Live Well Spaces Fund 2026

Grant Guidance Notes

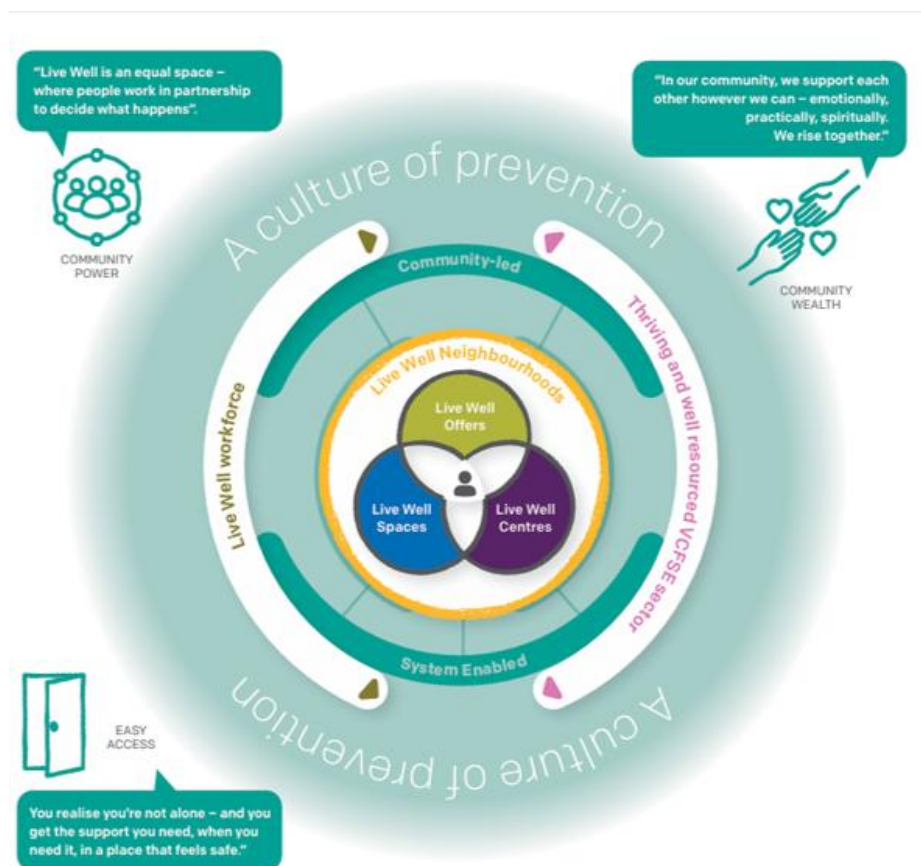
Background

Live Well is a Greater Manchester approach to ensuring **everyone can access great everyday support in every neighbourhood**. It is tackling health, social and economic inequalities by changing how people, communities and public services work together.

Each local authority area in Greater Manchester has received investment to implement the Live Well programme to include:

- The establishment of Live Well centres, spaces and offers;
- The integration of support through an optimum neighbourhood model;
- The development of a resilient VCFSE sector and an accelerated shift to a 'culture of prevention' across our system.

Live Well relies on a connected eco-system of Live Well Centres, Spaces and Offers and a thriving Voluntary Community Faith Social Enterprise (VCFSE) Sector.



Live Well Spaces

Live Well Spaces are trusted places rooted in the community, offering low barrier access to support and social connection. They are led by local communities, residents and VCFSE groups with deep community roots and lived experience at the heart.

They are a **network of Community Anchors**, inclusive and welcoming community-led places where people can connect, support each other and take action - within walking distance of every community. Somewhere to get help with getting online, sorting out finances, checking health and wellbeing or just having a chat.

Hallmarks of a Live Well Space:

Trusted places to connect, belong and get support

Live Well Spaces are warm, welcoming, free and safe places rooted in everyday community life. They're joyful, low-pressure environments where people come together to connect, create, have fun and build a sense of belonging, mutuality and purpose.

Trusted support for specific groups and experiences

Some Live Well Spaces are designed with, by and for particular communities — whether that's faith groups, people who identify as LGBTQ+, young people, older people, people with learning disabilities, or communities facing racial injustice and structural discrimination. They're often led by people with lived experience and grounded in shared identity, cultural understanding and trust.

Community power in action

Live Well Spaces don't just involve communities — they're run by them. The tone, culture, rhythm and purpose of each space are shaped by local people, often through grassroots organisations, mutual aid groups or volunteers with deep roots in the neighbourhood.

Aim of the Fund

The aim of the fund is to grow and strengthen a network of **Live Well Spaces** that provide everyday support in every neighbourhood and help to shape the future direction of Live Well implementation.

This fund will support Community Anchor Organisations to work towards achieving the Live Well Spaces Quality Mark, strengthen their long-term sustainability, and further develop equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) practices across their organisations.

Live Well Spaces Quality Mark

The Quality Mark brings together the Live Well Spaces Hallmarks and Tameside's Community led Wellbeing Principles to form a framework and development tool which:

- **recognises and celebrates** informal, welcoming and inclusive places where people come to connect, belong and get involved
- **provides investment** to strengthen community led action and power
- **connects Live Well spaces** into the wider Live Well eco-system and increase collaborative working across sectors

The investment will provide Community Anchors with the capacity, time and resources needed to achieve the Quality Mark, while supporting them to play an active role within the wider Live Well ecosystem. Organisations will strengthen partnership working, share learning, good practice and contribute to a more connected, inclusive and sustainable network of community-led, system enabled support across Tameside

Priorities

We are seeking Expressions of Interest from Community Anchor Organisations that:

- Can demonstrate the Community-Led Wellbeing Principles (outlined below)
- Are locally rooted within a neighbourhood in Tameside and have an established, community-led space that delivers activities and services for local residents, this may include a building, green space, blue space*, or a combination of these.
- Demonstrate the key hallmarks of a Live Well Space, or have a clear ambition to do so, and are committed to strengthening their Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) practice.
- Have the commitment of their Board of Trustees to engage with and work towards achieving the Quality Mark, supported by the Action Together Development Team, over a nine-month period commencing in December 2026.
- Are committed to collaboration across the Live Well ecosystem, including active participation in neighbourhood forums, engagement in learning and development opportunities, and supporting the implementation of the Live Well approach across Tameside.

Community Led Wellbeing Principles

The Community-led Wellbeing principles have been co-designed with Tameside's VCFSE sector and describe the behaviours, hopes and values that are intrinsic to community led prevention. All groups applying **must meet the following principles**:

1. We work with people one life at a time – on their terms, at their pace for as long as they need us.
2. People trust in us, to work alongside them consistently with compassion, and without judgement. We don't give up on people.
3. We are safe open spaces where everyone can feel connected and feel they belong.
4. We are peers and facilitators within communities who can spot the signs of what is really going on with others and encourage them to make informed choices.
5. We are the trusted voice within communities and the link to everything else, advocating for the most vulnerable and those in crisis.
6. We offer positivity and hope - opportunities for people to gain a sense of purpose and grow their skills, confidence, and resilience.
7. We are our communities. We grew out of our communities; we are committed to being here for the long term.

Grant Amounts:

A Medium Grant of £25,000

A grant of £25,000 will be awarded over a 12-month period, with funding released in three staged payments linked to progress towards achieving the Live Well Spaces Quality Mark. This phased approach is designed to support delivery, provide ongoing development opportunities, and recognise key milestones achieved throughout the Quality Mark journey.

As part of the Expression of Interest stage, applicants will be asked to provide a high-level outline of how they intend to use the funding. We recognise that priorities, activities and investment needs may evolve as organisations progress through the Quality Mark process. Therefore, proposed budgets are expected to be indicative at this stage and may be refined to reflect emerging action plans, organisational development priorities, and support identified through the Quality Mark assessment and development journey.

Expectations of the Grant

During the 12-month development programme, trustees of Community Anchor Organisations will work closely with Action Together to meet and evidence the Live Well Spaces Quality Mark requirements. This will include:

- Completing an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) to assess how inclusive and accessible the organisation is, identify opportunities for improvement, and ensure services, activities and decision-making processes meet the needs of the wider community.
- Undertaking an Organisational Health Check to identify strengths and areas for development across key areas such as governance, financial management, leadership, safeguarding, policies and health and safety, helping to strengthen long-term sustainability and resilience.
- Reviewing and strengthening good governance and effective safeguarding practices.

- Actively participating in the Live Well ecosystem, including neighbourhood forums, training opportunities, networking events and collaborative activities that contribute to the development of Live Well across Tameside.
- Capturing and sharing one to two case stories of change that demonstrate how individuals have improved their health, wellbeing and community connections through their engagement with the Live Well Space. These stories will be brought to life through videography and other promotional opportunities.
- Board of Trustees maintaining regular engagement with the Action Together Development Team, including development meetings, action planning and progress reviews, to support successful completion of the Quality Mark.
- Collecting and submitting evidence against all seven sections of the Live Well Spaces Quality Mark framework, demonstrating progress, learning and achievement throughout the programme.
- The expectation is that organisations will work towards making progress across all seven sections of the Quality Mark. We recognise that some standards, particularly those relating to buildings or wider system requirements, may not be fully achievable for all organisations at this stage. These standards have been marked with an asterisk (*) on the Quality Mark Framework to highlight where flexibility may be required

Who is the funding for?

The fund is open to Community Anchor organisations that are:

- Not for profit;
- Community led and run
- Based and occupying a community building (and or green or blue space) that is rooted in a neighbourhood / town in Tameside.
- Have multiple functions, (offering a broad range of activities, services and opportunities)
- Have unparalleled local knowledge and well establish networks and connections into the community they are based in.
- Have a mission to improve the whole of the community and not just a part of it.

You will also:

- Be a voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) group locally rooted within a neighbourhood within Tameside
- a member of Action Together CIO (you can register for free to become a member [here](#));
and
- formally constituted; *and*
- incorporated; *and*
- have relevant insurance liability cover; *and*
- have up to date safeguarding policies; *and*
- have at least three people on your board or committee who are not related; *and*
- have a bank account in your organisation's name requiring at least two unrelated signatories.

Who is the funding *not* for:

Applications will not be accepted from organisations that:

- Are trading for profit, are statutory services or are intending to redistribute grant awards
- Are aimed at increasing the membership of a particular Political party
- Are aimed at the promotion of one/a religious belief or for activities with any religious affiliation
- Are not registered with either Companies House or The Charities Commission or are not evidently working towards this*. This is only applicable to applications requesting over £5,000.

**We can help new groups to register via our Community Development Team*

What the funding can be spent on:	What the funding CANNOT be spent on:
The costs of funded activity on a full cost recovery basis, including: • Organisational overheads and running costs • Staff and volunteer costs • Management and administration costs • Equipment and promotional materials • Training and development • Transport and travel • One-off events and activities • Capital costs that support the delivery of the Quality Mark	• 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. • Expenses that have already been incurred – retrospective costs.

Key Dates

- Applications open on **Tuesday 29th September 2026**
- Applications will close on **Monday 9th November 2026 at 12 noon.**
- All grants must be awarded by **31st December 2026**
- All funding must be spent by **31st December 2027**

Decision making process:

- Applications will be considered by the **Live Well Delivery Group**, which will act as the decision-making panel for this fund. The group brings together representatives from both statutory organisations and the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector, ensuring funding decisions are informed by a broad range of expertise, perspectives and local knowledge. This group is leading the implementation of Live Well across Tameside.

- You will be contacted within 7 working days after decisions are made unless you are asked for further information or to redevelop aspects of your proposal.

Application Process:

All applications must be sent to funding@actiontogether.org.uk and you will receive notification of receipt via email.

The application process will include:

- **Submission of an Expression of Interest (EOI) Form**, outlining your organisation, your work withing Tameside, and how the funding could support your development through the Live Well Spaces Quality Mark.
- **Assessment by the Live Well Delivery Group**, which will review all eligible applications and make funding recommendations.
- **An introductory online discussion** with the Chair and one other Trustee (or equivalent senior leader) from shortlisted organisations. This conversation will provide an opportunity to discuss the organisation's ambitions, explore development priorities, and agree the next steps for progressing through the Quality Mark journey and grant programme.

Please note:

- We will only consider applications from organisations who have completed all previous monitoring requirements for any previous funds received from Action Together. If you have any queries about monitoring, please email jayne.gibson@actiontogether.org.uk
- Action Together is an accredited Living Wage Funder. This means we encourage organisations that employ staff to become an accredited Living Wage Employer.

Completing the application form

- Please ensure that ALL boxes on the application form are completed.
- Please ensure you include information in your application about how you will measure the impact and success of your project.
- If you have any queries about the application form or application process, please contact Jayne Gibson on jayne.gibson@actiontogether.org.uk or 0161 339 2345 ext 3705.

Along with your completed application form you will need to submit the following documents:

- Governing document (e.g. Constitution, Memorandum of Articles of Association)
- Recent community bank account **in organisation's name** with at least two unrelated signatories
- Public Liability Insurance and employers liability insurance (if applicable)
- Safeguarding Policy
- Project Risk Assessment/s.

Ongoing support:

Our Development Workers are aware of what is happening in their areas and can support groups they work with throughout every stage of an application.

Open process:

We encourage questions from applicants at any stage of the grants process and are always on hand to discuss any queries and try to be as open and flexible as possible

- **Jonathan King**
Jonathan.king@actiontogether.org.uk
- **Dawn Acton**
dawn.acton@actiontogether.org.uk
- Saman Nisar
saman.nisar@actiontogether.org.uk

Glossary of Terms and useful resources

Equality	Being treated in a way which is consistent to all; achieving outcomes which are consistent to all
Equity	Being treated in a way which acknowledges structural or institutional barriers or inequalities and seeks to redress these; achieving outcomes which counteract structural or institutional barriers or inequalities
Diversity	The practice or quality of including or involving people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds and of different genders, sexual orientations, etc.
Inclusion	The practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalised, such as disabled people and members of other minority groups
Equalities Act 2010	The UK's Equalities Act 2010 seeks to protect people from discrimination and ensure that everyone is treated fairly. Easy Read: The Equality Act - making equality real - GOV.UK Equality Act 2010
Greater Manchester Live Well	GM Live Well is Greater Manchester's commitment to ensuring great everyday support is available in every neighbourhood. It represents a shift in how public services work with people and communities. Live Well - Greater Manchester Combined Authority
Live Well Centres, Spaces and Offers Hallmarks	Emerging hallmarks for Centres, Spaces, Offers and Neighbourhoods across Greater Manchester (GM) 6902327eb2fa68078fca4a20_hallmarks-version-1-compressed (1).pdf

Green Space	A green space is defined as any vegetated land in an urban area which includes various forms of open space such as parks, gardens and natural environments Access to green space in England - GOV.UK
Blue Space	A blue space is broadly defined as natural and artificial water environments which can provide health and wellbeing benefits Access to blue space in England - GOV.UK

The use of AI within your application

We recognise that AI can be a valuable tool in various aspects of project development, such as brainstorming or editing responses. However, we strongly discourage its use for the drafting of answers within funding applications, as it can compromise the integrity of the application process.

It is often clear when an organisation uses AI to draft their application as we notice similar or identical language and content within numerous funding applications. Strong applications help us understand your organisation and your community, but when they are drafted by AI the generic language which is used makes it hard to understand what your organisation is planning to do and why.

AI written responses often claim to have taken certain steps to develop their project idea, such as a needs assessment, focus groups or consultation with users. Unless the group includes statistics and quotes in their bid, it raises doubt about whether these steps have actually happened. This can affect the decision-making process and an outcome of an application as the authenticity of the application can be called into question.

Where there is doubt about if your application has been drafted by AI, we will ask for some additional information to support your application.