

Sport Unites Fund: guidance notes

These guidance notes are here to give you clear information about the fund and help you decide if your project is a good fit. We've kept the notes brief but you can find further information on our [Sport Unites Fund webpage](#).

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1. Sport Unites – context

[Sport Unites](#) is the Mayor of London's community sport programme, which was launched in 2018. At the heart of the Mayor's approach to sport in London is his belief in the power of sport to bring people together and improve their lives. Sport Unites supports the Mayor's long-term vision for London to be **the most active and socially integrated city in the world**. This programme has five priority areas to achieve this and the Sport Unites Fund is for projects that will address these priorities.

As a city we are facing the most challenging period in recent history. The economic, social and health impact of coronavirus cannot be overstated. In response to the crisis we face the Mayor convened the [London Recovery Board](#), which has committed to taking a [missions-based approach](#) to the Recovery Programme. Sport Unites is contributing to the [Strong Communities](#) and [Young People](#) missions.

2. Our priorities

Our Sport Unites priority areas:

- Helping the most inactive people be more active
- Improving people's mental health and wellbeing
- Decreasing isolation/loneliness
- Strengthening connections in your local area and across communities
- Reducing serious youth violence

Your project can work towards any of these areas – we'll ask you which. We know your project might work on more than one, but ask that you select up to two that you feel are the best 'fit'. There's no advantage to working on more than one priority, we only want to understand where your project sits within Sport Unites.

In your application you'll need to tell us how the specific activities you plan to deliver will help you tackle the Sport Unites area(s) you select, and how you'll measure the difference you make. For more information on how we measure change – or the difference you make in relation to our priorities, see our [priority outcome pathways](#).

3. The opportunity – how much you can apply for and our two kinds of grants explained

The Sport Unites Fund has two 'streams' –Tried & Tested; and New Ideas.

Tried & Tested: grants of between £10,000 and £50,000

To apply for a Tried & Tested grant, you'll need to be able to show us that your project will work by talking about your previous success; and you'll need to be able to answer yes to one of these statements:

- you've got a tried and tested project that you know will work; you can show previous success and would like Sport Unites investment to support this same project
- you've successfully tried out a project and would like Sport Unites investment to grow or scale-up your project
- you've tried and tested other projects and can show previous success. You want to use this experience to try out a new project and would like Sport Unites investment to support this.

Tried & Tested grants are available to [constituted organisations](#) only. To apply, you need to complete an online application.

New Ideas: grants of up to £10,000

To apply for a New Ideas grant, you'll need to come to us with a project that hasn't yet been funded (by any funder) and answer yes to one of these statements:

- you have a brilliant idea for a new project to try out and need some initial investment and support
- your project is not new, but you haven't received funding for it before and you need some investment and support.

New Ideas grants are available to individuals or informal (not constituted) groups, as well as constituted organisations. To apply, you need to complete a short online Expression of Interest (EOI) form. If your EOI is successful, you'll be invited to have a follow-up conversation with a member of our team to talk about your project idea in more detail.

4. Who can apply – eligibility

Eligibility for the Sport Unites Fund – you need to be able to answer yes to all of these questions:

1. Are you working on a not-for-profit basis?
2. Does your project have a focus on sport or physical activity?
3. Will your project take place within the Greater London area?
4. Will your project help Londoners? (people who are not tourists or short-term visitors)
5. Will you have the appropriate safeguarding measures in place for when your project starts?
6. Are you applying for funding for project costs, including direct costs and overheads? (revenue funding)
7. Will your planned project finish by 30 June 2022?
8. Are you applying for an amount which is less than your annual turnover?

Additionally, if you're applying to New Ideas and you're an individual or informal (not constituted) group:

1. You'll need to have a constituted and incorporated organisation in your area that will vouch for you/your work. (You'll need to have their prior agreement and enter their details in your Expression of Interest form.)
2. If you're successful, the organisation vouching for you will need to provide a letter of support and receive the funding on your behalf.

We encourage applications by user-led and equalities-focused organisations that are working with groups and communities most affected by Covid-19.

For information on the types of group/organisation that are eligible to apply, please see our [FAQs](#).

5. Costs and budget

For a full list of costs that we can fund, and for information to support your budget, please see our [FAQs](#).

We expect all projects to put 5% (or more) towards monitoring, evaluation and learning so that you, and we, can understand your project's impact and learn from it. For example, if you're requesting £10,000 total funding you should budget at least £500 towards monitoring, evaluation and learning.

We encourage applicants to bring an additional 20% (approximately) of the total award requested. This might be external cash support you have received or are expecting towards the project from other funders or sources. Or non-cash support for your project – things that you need but you either don't have to pay for, or which add value to the project. For example, free/reduced cost venue hire or volunteer support.

We won't fund:

- projects where sport and physical activity are **not** the focus
- **normal management and admin** salaries that aren't directly related to your project
- **general office costs and overheads** that aren't directly related to your project
- **core capital costs** such as building works or large fixed items of equipment

6. Key details – at a glance

- Applications for Tried & Tested grants, and Expressions of Interest for New Ideas grants, are both accepted via online forms. To apply, please visit: <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/sports/sport-unites/>
- We've got a limited pot of funding to award over an extended period of time. We expect to stay open to applications until at least **Friday 12 November**. We'll update information on our website before we close the fund.
- We'll let you know the outcome of your application as soon as we can. From the point at which you apply, the earliest you can expect to hear is 3-4 weeks, though in some cases it may take up to 10-11 weeks.
- Minimum project delivery period is 6 weeks and maximum project delivery period is 6 months.
- All successful projects will need to be completed by **30 June 2022**. So, for projects lasting up to 6 months, you'll need to start by 1 January 2022.
- We know that project delivery could be disrupted by Covid-19 and changing government guidelines. We'll regularly review and adapt decisions on funding within these guidelines if necessary. We'll liaise with grantees about this and will be as flexible as possible.

- If you're successful, all grantees will need to carry out and submit project monitoring, evaluation and learning. You can see an example template [here](#).
- We expect all projects to put 5% (or more) towards monitoring, evaluation and learning so that you, and we, can understand your project's impact and learn from it. For example, if you are requesting £10,000 total funding you should budget at least £500 towards monitoring, evaluation and learning.
- You'll be responsible for all financial and legal aspects of your project. If successful, you'll be asked for copies of the relevant documentation at the funding agreement stage. To be funded you need to have these essential policies and measures in place by the time your project starts:
 - project risk assessment, including a Covid-19 risk assessment;
 - public liability insurance;
 - Children and Young People and/or Adult Safeguarding Policies – if you're working with children and young people or adults at risk;
 - DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) checks for staff/volunteers – if required for your activities.
- We encourage applicants to bring an additional 20% (approximately) of the total award requested. This might be external cash support you have received or are expecting towards the project from other funders or sources. Or non-cash support for your project which are things that you need but you either don't have to pay for, or which add value to the project. For example, volunteer support or free/reduced cost venue hire.

7. Further information and support

- If we don't cover what you need to know here or in our [FAQs](#), we encourage you to please contact our grant management provider, Rocket Science, sportunites@rocketsciencelab.co.uk or 020 3291 3026.
- If you're not sure about eligibility, do get in touch with us first to check. We're happy to answer any questions.
- We host online fund Q&A sessions for anyone with questions to support their application. Sign up is on [Eventbrite](#).
- If you require the application materials in a different format, let us know. Rocket Science offer provision for applicants who have accessibility needs.
- For people who face barriers in completing online written forms, we've a limited number of spaces for you to apply by phone or video call. If you need this support, please email sports@sportunites.co.uk or call 020 3291 3026
- More information about Sport Unites is at www.london.gov.uk/sport
- London Sport offer a free check and challenge service to support people with funding bids: <https://londonsport.org/our-work/funding/>

Appendix

8. Our Sport Unites priorities explained in more detail

1. Helping the most inactive people be more active

This priority has a focus on supporting physically inactive people, to get more people in London participating, more often, in a wider range of sport and physical activity. By encouraging and enabling the most inactive people to be more active, projects will support people who are among the most susceptible to poor health outcomes through their inactivity.

Because we want to reach the most inactive people, we [use Sport England's definition of inactive](#). An inactive person is someone who does less than 30 minutes of moderate intensity equivalent exercise per week.

- Moderate intensity – this is exercise that raises your heart rate and makes you feel a little bit out of breath, like fast walking.
- 30 minutes per week – this can be achieved in one go, or in 10-minute bursts across different days through a combination of activities.

What we're looking for:

- Projects that will involve inactive people in moderate intensity exercise, at the minimum raising their heart rate and making them feel a little out of breath. This of course may depend on such factors as their age, general state of health and level of ability or disability, and we will take this into account as long as you provide information in your application for us to assess.
- Projects that show knowledge and understanding of the specific barriers your target audience face and help to overcome these through your planning, support and activities. We know that all sorts of barriers may prevent Londoners from being active. It may be cost or time; or worrying about whether they'll feel welcome and included or having anxiety about what to expect when they turn up.
- Projects that tackle the increased levels of inactivity that have been made worse during the Covid-19 pandemic because of shielding and self-isolating, lockdowns, social distancing restrictions, disrupted services and wider issues.

2. Improving people's mental health and wellbeing

This priority has a focus on using the power of sport and physical activity to improve Londoners' mental health and wellbeing. Research shows that physically active people have lower health risks, including mental health risks. Physical activity has been shown to have a positive impact on our mood, sleep, self-esteem and levels of stress, and people who are physically active reduce their risk of depression by 48%.

According to the World Health Organisation, 'mental health is not just the absence of mental disorder. It is defined as a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their community'.

And wellbeing (sometimes referred to as mental wellbeing or emotional wellbeing) can be described as 'a positive state of mind and body, feeling safe and able to cope, with a sense of connection with people, communities and the wider environment'¹.

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/213761/dh_124058.pdf

What we're looking for:

- We're open to projects that use sport and physical activity to promote the benefits of sport and physical activity for good mental health and wellbeing; **or** to address mental health problems or illness. Please tell us clearly which of these your project addresses and why your chosen activities will enable you to successfully tackle this priority.
- Projects that clearly consider and show how their planned activities will work to improve mental health and wellbeing and how they will measure this.
- Projects that include emotional or social wraparound support to help Londoners improve their mental health and wellbeing.
- We know that taking part in sport and physical activity can be challenging for those of us with mental health problems. Applications should show a clear understanding of the barriers to taking part that their target audience face, together with a plan for helping to overcome these barriers.

3. Decreasing isolation/loneliness

This priority has a focus on supporting Londoners who are isolated and/or lonely. By this, we mean people who are separated from social or family contact, community involvement, or access to services. It may also mean that they stay at home for long periods of time, either on their own or maybe with another person.

Anyone can experience isolation, though there are some factors which can lead or contribute to it, such as unemployment or health problems. As a result, these factors may become worse – for example, someone's health may get worse because they are isolated, and they don't access the health care or services they need to help them get better.

Nearly half of Londoners are experiencing loneliness, with 12 per cent of Londoners aged 16+ reporting feeling lonely 'often' in the last 4 weeks and a further 34 per cent reporting feeling lonely 'some of the time' in the last 4 weeks.²

What we're looking for:

- Projects that go beyond just bringing isolated and/or lonely Londoners together, but which positively influence people's behaviour. This could be activities that build participants' confidence and skills, provide meaningful opportunities to strengthen their connections with other people, local groups and the wider community, or equip people with knowledge on how to access services and means of support.
- Projects that have strong 'on the ground' outreach and clear engagement strategies and can identify and engage with Londoners who are either lonely or vulnerable to loneliness.
- Projects that address the specific barriers preventing people from taking part in sport and physical activity, taking part in their community, and accessing services. Barriers might include language, accessibility and inclusivity of activities, cost, or physical or mental health problems.
- Projects that provide people with a sense of belonging and identity to their local area and to London.

4. Strengthening connections in your local area and across communities

This priority has a focus on using sport and physical activity to strengthen connections and build trust within and across communities.

Sport gives people the opportunity to engage and be part of a community. Many community sports projects will bring people together and strengthen communities as a result. However, this priority is focused on the intentional use of sport and physical activity, which means that

² Socio-economic Impact of Covid-19, City Intelligence Unit, Greater Londoner Authority, May 2021

the sport and physical activity is chosen and adapted to meet the specific needs of participants to achieve improved and strengthened connections and relationships.

What we're looking for:

- Projects that support the development of positive and meaningful relationships within and across communities, focusing on what we as individuals and groups have in common and recognising the value of us all being different.
- Projects that aim to break down barriers, divisions and tensions within a geographical area or between groups; challenge stereotypes and tackle prejudice; and encourage mutual respect and understanding.
- Projects that advocate for structural changes (such as removing barriers and reducing inequalities) to better support and embrace groups and individuals that are marginalised.

5. Reducing serious youth violence

This priority has a focus on providing regular activities for young Londoners who are at risk of exclusion or getting involved in violence and criminal activity. This can include a young person who has previously committed a crime, or is at risk of committing a crime. Young Londoners may be aged 10-25 years.

What we're looking for:

- Projects that provide employment and education opportunities for at risk young Londoners.
- Projects that hold trusted relationships with young people and can offer early interventions for crime prevention, or interventions that support young people that have been in custody to turn away from crime through diversionary activities.
- Projects that can show previous success in these diversionary interventions, especially if you apply for a 'Tried and Tested' grant. This can include reduction in (re)offending rates, reduction in school exclusions, education/employment/training uptake, or improved aspirations.
- Projects that provide emotional, social and other wraparound support to young people at risk.
- Projects that have carefully considered how the young people you plan to work with will be referred to or find out about for your project.
- Projects that use sport and physical activity to engage young people at risk. We're open to projects that include things other than sport such as art, mentoring, wellbeing activities etc. but the focus needs to be on sport. It's important for applicants to consider how these activities positively contribute to young people's broader aspirations and development.