Grant opportunity: Funding differently – Neighbourhood Health Grants Inclusive, unrestricted and light touch (Closing date: Monday 11th December 2023)

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Welcome

Following on from the first round of the pilot where £55,000 was distributed to VCS groups in Southwark in August 2023, the 2nd round is opening on **Monday 30th October 2023. Grants of £5,000 will be awarded to 10 VCS groups in Southwark.**

Community Southwark, Partnership Southwark and United St Saviour's Charity have worked with VCS groups, the statutory sector, and funders to develop a grant process that aims to break down barriers to funding that VCS organisations experience in Southwark as highlighted in Community Southwark's recent state of the sector research.

This grant opportunity seeks to reduce health inequalities at a targeted neighbourhood level through strengthening small, local VCS groups.

This grant is a pilot with VCS groups involved in the decision-making process about how funds are distributed. It is a learning opportunity for all involved and following the first round of funding, we have made changed based on feedback from groups involved for the second round.

Eligibility criteria

In refining criteria, we have focused on the most deprived areas of Southwark and those that are most likely to be further impacted by the cost-of-living crisis. The intention is to direct funding to where it is most needed. You can see the data here. It also recognises that funding challenges disproportionately affects smaller groups which don't have sufficient capacity or existing relationships with funders.

- A not-for-profit organisation (including unincorporated groups, CICs, CIOs and more) operating in Southwark.
- Supporting people in at least 1 of the following wards: Camberwell Green, Faraday, Old Kent Road, Nunhead and Queen's Road, Peckham. You can find ward names and areas on our website**.**
- An annual income of £40,000 or less.
- A group that supports people with disabilities and/or mental health needs. This can be preventative work and doesn't have to the main focus of an organisation's work.
- Your organisation will need to confirm they have the following: A safeguarding policy, a governing document such as a constitution, a bank account in the name of your organisation.
- Groups who have received funding in the 1st round are not eligible to apply for this round.

Important

Please note that VCS groups in Southwark will decide how grants are distributed via two decision-making stages. If you are short-listed for the 2nd stage you will be required to review 10 applications and submit your scores and feedback electronically. You will need to do this between the 15th and 29th January 2023 and the organisation you represent will receive a good will gesture of £100 in recognition of your time. You will not be eligible for a grant if you do not complete scoring for others. For more information on this, please refer to page 4 and 5 of this document.

Other information

- Grants of £5,000 will be awarded to 10 VCS groups in Southwark.
- Funds granted will be on an unrestricted basis to fund whatever the organisation needs, including core/overhead costs. Grant applicants do not need to detail how they intend to use the funds when they apply.
- There is no timescale for funds to be used but we'd like to be able to start reporting on its impact by March 2024. This does not mean grantees should spend all the funds by then but it would be helpful if grantees had an idea of how they might use the funds and/or what impact they think they might have.
- Groups who are successful with receiving funding do not have to complete a monitoring report.
- We would expect that groups submit one application only in each round.
- If your group does not have the required documentation (A safeguarding policy, constitution, bank account) Community Southwark can help you get these documents ready for future funding rounds. Please contact Katherine de Kretser – katherine@communitysouthwark.org.

Timeline:

Second round	£5,000 to 10 groups
Applications open – 6 weeks to apply	Monday 30th October 2023
Applications close	Monday 11th December 2023
Decision-making – 1st stage - VCS panel	Week of the 8th January 2024
Final 20 VCS groups agree how funding distributed	Monday 29th January 2024
Funding distributed	**End of February 2025**

Applying for a grant

The link for applying for the grant will be open from Monday 30th October 2023

The online form will ask you to confirm your eligibility. Once you have confirmed you are eligible, you will need to answer the following questions:

1) How does your work make a difference to the community?
2) How would the money help your organisation?

Guidance on answering the questions

- If you need help with your application, please contact katherine@communitysouthwark.org. See [page 6](#) of this document for further information on support available
- You can submit your response via a written document or a video recording. **Please choose one format only.**
- Those reviewing your submission will score your response based on the following:
  1) How does your work make a difference to the community?
  1   – No difference shown, 10 – significant difference shown
  2) How would the money help your organisation?
  1 – no help indicated, 10 – significant help

- It is important that you answer both questions as each question has equal weighting when scored.
- If you like, you can add a case study (an example of your work or of someone who has benefitted from your work) to help answer these questions.
- Write your answers considering that those who score your application will have no prior knowledge of what you do. Therefore, make sure you are really clear on what you do and why it is important. Be specific when you explain how your activities e.g. how many people do you support/how often do your activities run?/what is their impact?
- You do not need to use the funding for a specific project and it can support core costs or running costs. Please give us an idea of what you will use the money for but you do not need to provide a specific budget. The intention is for this funding to be flexible and meet the needs of your organisation as you see fit.
- **Examples for question 2:** How would the money help your organisation?
  - The funding received from this application will enable us to receive more referrals of young people, allocate more support hours as well as more coaching during the week. This has been recurring feedback we have received from our target audience as well as being recommended within our impact report conducted by the Mayor of London - to scale our work to impact more young people.
  - The requested funding would enable us to continue delivering our Wellness programme and provide space for us to plan our future funding and growth strategy.
  - The funding will allow us to grow and deliver our work uninterrupted and support 20 more people over the next few months.
  - The funding will enable us to sustain our core operations, including staff salaries, training materials, and program delivery costs. Additionally, the funding will empower us to enhance our outreach efforts, engage more young people, and strengthen our community partnerships.
  - The funding will attract and retain new volunteers also means we can increase the opening hours, and continue to offer warm space and a safe environment with fun and stimulating weekly activities.

Guidance for written document

- There is a 350-word limit for each question but you can write less than this. The important thing is not the word count but that you answer the question clearly and concisely.

Guidance for video

- Your video submission does not have to be professionally made. It can be a video recorded on a smartphone. There is no time limit but we suggest the video should be no longer than 2-3 minutes.
- If you are having trouble uploading your video onto the grant portal, you can also add a link to an upload e.g. YouTube, Vimeo or OneDrive.

Decision-making

VCS groups who helped design the grant pilot made it very clear that VCS groups should be involved with decision-making and also stated that they wanted the decision-making process and criteria available at grant application stage and to be clear and transparent.

Stage 1 – if required

- If more than 20 groups apply, Community Southwark will create and facilitate a decision-making panel consisting of 5 VCS representatives from Southwark-based organisations who are independent of those who have applied.
- Community Southwark will do an open call-out to organisations who are Community Southwark members. Our members are all not-for-profits operating in Southwark.
- Panel selection will be selected randomly from those who express an interest and meet the criteria as above so everyone has an equal chance of taking part. The panel will select the top 20 applications according to the following criteria and graded 1-10.

    1) How does your work make a difference to the community?
    1 = No difference shown, 10 = significant difference shown
    2) How would the money help your organisation?
    1 = no help indicated, 10 = significant help

- Scores will then be added up for each group and the top 20 will go forward to the next round.

Stage 2

Decision – making – top 20

- The 20 groups will receive the final 20 applications via email and be asked to review 10 applications. Groups will be informed which 10 they need to score so that it is shared between all 20 groups and so that every group receives scorings from 10 groups.
- Each organisation will grade each other's submissions according to the same criteria as the panel (stage1).

Feedback

- Feedback will be collected and shared with groups at both stages so that groups who have applied can also learn about what makes a good application and how to improve (if needed) in the future.
- We will aim to let groups know whether they have been successful or not at both stages within 1 week. Depending on the number of groups who apply, providing further feedback may take a little longer but we will endeavour to share this as early as possible.

Payment for VCS engagement

We recognise that VCS time is valuable and the skills and experience of VCS representatives should not be undervalued. Therefore, we will pay for VCS engagement in the grants process as we have also done when planning this pilot project.

- A payment of £400 will be made to VCS representatives (to their organisation) involved in the first stage of decision-making.
- A payment of £100 will be made to VCS organisations involved in the second round of decision making.

Support from Community Southwark

We will support groups if they want advice on their safeguarding policy, constitution or bank account.

We will also advise about the grant application process, if groups have particular questions. We can also advise you on how to answer the questions. Although we are not able to write your response for you, we are happy to review your application before submission. Please ensure you contact us at least 3 weeks before the deadline if you have any questions or would like advice.

Please contact Katherine@communitysouthwark.org for more information.

Monitoring and measuring impact

- VCS groups who are successful in receiving funding will not be required to submit a monitoring report.
- Community Southwark, United St Saviour's Charity and Partnership Southwark will collect information on the impact of the grant and the process itself through in-person visits and phone calls.
- We will seek to understand how the funding has helped, collect case studies where appropriate and get feedback on groups' experiences on being part of the project – what worked well, what could be better.
- Information collected will be collated into a learning report to show the impact of this type of grant funding.