

# Autistic Adult Support Fund

## Fund Information and Guidance Notes

Application deadline:  
12pm Wednesday 13 September 2023

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# About this fund

The Adult Autistic Support Fund builds on the work of a pilot funded by Scottish Government which ran between 2020 and 2023 and funded seven organisations to provide post diagnostic support to autistic people.

An [independent evaluation](#) of the pilot highlighted that a lack of support, further information or follow up immediately after diagnosis left people feeling 'in limbo', abandoned and unsure of next steps. The evaluation confirmed the benefits to people who had received help and advice after their autism diagnosis through one-to-one support or participating in group sessions. Additionally, a significant number of people who received support from the pilot organisations felt that their self-confidence and self-esteem had improved.

Respondents said:

*'I have found the post-diagnostic service to be a lifeline. I feel much more confident, and brave and can live life on my own terms in this world.'*

*'The [post-diagnostic] support has been life changing. Don't feel alone anymore and really benefitted.'*

The Autistic Adult Support Fund will provide £500,000 this year for the six-month period from October 2023 to end of March 2024, to build on the learnings of the pilot, focusing on the provision of support to adults with an autism diagnosis, self-identified autistic adults and their families and carers.

**There are two strands of funding available for Scottish not-for-profit organisations:**

- 1) **Small grants** of between £15,000 and £30,000 to support small, grassroots, locally-based projects. The application process for these awards has been simplified to encourage community-based provision and innovation.
- 2) **Large grants** of between £30,001 and £75,000 for national or regional projects by organisations specialising in support for autistic people and their families and carers.

Successful proposals will:

- **Meaningfully involve autistic people** in the development, design and delivery of the activity.
- Be **strengths based**, making the most of, and building on, the skills and experiences of autistic people and assets within communities.

- **Work in partnership**, with a good understanding of what others are doing locally, complementing and adding value to other relevant activity in the area.

Successful proposals for large grants will also:

- **Integrate with statutory services**, showing a clear relationship and plan for this work with local provision of support for autistic adults with the local statutory service provider e.g. Health and Social Care Partnerships (HSCPs)

**Funding is available until 31 March 2024.** It is hoped that this fund will run on a recurring annual basis but is subject to Ministerial approvals as part of Scottish Government's annual budget process.

**The deadline for applications is 12pm (midday) on Wednesday 13 September 2023.**

If there are barriers to you accessing the information, please get in touch:  
[autismenquiries@inspiringscotland.org.uk](mailto:autismenquiries@inspiringscotland.org.uk).

## Who can apply

To apply for this funding, you must be a not-for-profit organisation working closely with autistic people.

### You must be a Scottish not-for-profit organisation

You should be a Scotland-based, not-for-profit, incorporated organisation with a '**legal personality**'. Please note if you are a registered charity this does not automatically mean you are an incorporated organisation, so please check the legal form of your organisation before submitting an application. Eligible legal forms include:

- Company Limited by Guarantee
- Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation
- Community Benefit Society
- Co-operative Society
- Community Interest Company

Statutory services (e.g., NHS, Local Authorities) are not eligible to apply. However, strong, clearly evidenced applications from eligible third sector organisations working in collaboration with statutory services may be considered.

You must have a bank account registered in the name of your organisation. This bank account must require two signatories for withdrawals.

### You must have strong experience working with autistic people

Organisations applying for small grant awards (£15,000-£30,000) will be working closely with autistic people, as part of the organisation's core mission.

Organisations applying for large grants (£30,001-£75,000) should specialise in support for autistic people and their families and carers, with good evidence on quality. You will be able to demonstrate that your work has a significant strategic impact and supports delivery of the [National Performance Framework outcomes](#).

## You can be part of a partnership project

Collaborative applications made in partnership with other organisations are encouraged. Projects might link up services on a geographical basis, provide complementary services or other new ways to combine strengths to support autistic people's diagnostic journey. The lead organisation should apply on behalf of the partnership. Where the partnership includes a statutory service (e.g. NHS, Local Authority) the lead applicant and primary funding beneficiary must be the third sector organisation. A partnership agreement or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) setting out the approach to delivery, payment of funding and reporting must be included for each partner. Budgets must identify what each partner receives and contributes to the project.

# The type of projects we fund

All projects must meet all of the following requirements:

## 1. Your project supports autistic adults

This fund looks to support adults who have received an autism diagnosis, who are awaiting assessment, or who self-identify as autistic. Adults in this instance refers to people 18 years and over. Projects supporting the families and carers of autistic adults are also eligible.

## 2. Your project meets a need or fills a gap in provision

A specific goal of the programme is to enable autistic people to access appropriate and high-quality support within 4-6 weeks of first contact. You will need to provide evidence of the need for your project, such as how it fills a gap in current service provision or knowledge base. Services should be provided free of charge to autistic adults and their families and carers.

## 3. Autistic people are meaningfully involved

You will be asked about the role autistic people play in your organisation and how you have involved autistic lived experience in the development of your project. All funded projects will be strengths-based; you should focus on making the most of and building upon the skills and experiences of autistic people, as well as the assets within communities.

## **4. Support provided is evidence based and promotes a positive view of autistic people**

You will be able to evidence how your approach builds on up-to-date knowledge and autistic perspectives.

## **5. Your organisation works in partnership**

You are not required to be part of a formal partnership, but you will need to demonstrate a good understanding of what others are doing locally and have good working relationships. You will be asked how your project complements and adds value to other relevant activity in your area.

## **6. Your project supports the programme outcomes:**

- Adults who have received an autism diagnosis or who self-identify as autistic access support to help with their understanding of autism and their next steps
- Families and carers of autistic adults feel their family member has effective support to allow them to process and better understand what it means to be autistic
- Autistic adults who access this support feel that it helps their wellbeing
- Families and carers of autistic adults who access support for themselves feel that it helps their wellbeing
- Scottish Government obtains additional insight on what works for autistic people and how to address gaps in support
- A relationship and plan for this work is in place with the local statutory service provider for autistic adults e.g. HSCP.

## **7. Your project will measure progress to understand the difference you are making**

You will need to clearly explain how you will evaluate your project, i.e. how you will measure delivery against the fund outcomes and how you will demonstrate the difference the funded work makes for autistic people. You should explain the methods you will use to involve people in this evaluation, what information you will gather and how often you will gather it.

## **8. Your project is inclusive of all autistic people**

Your project should be inclusive, which means that it should not exclude any autistic adults or their families. To do this, you should consider the physical, social or economic challenges people might have in accessing this support, and if there are ways you can overcome these challenges to ensure the widest range of people can participate.

## **9. You have a robust safeguarding framework and practice**

You will need to demonstrate best practice on safeguarding of adults, and clear commitment to relevant professional standards, accreditation, governance and training requirements for safe, appropriate delivery of the services proposed. Proposed work should be trauma-aware.

Applications for large awards (£30,001-£75,000) must also:

## **10. Make a strategic impact**

You will be asked how your project supports relevant strategic outcomes and contributes to the development of knowledge and practice in the sector, and specifically improving the lives of autistic people. You will need to demonstrate a clear commitment to continuous learning and quality improvement and how you are working, or plan to work, to fill gaps in current service provision.

## **11. Support larger numbers of people**

You will have a strong national or regional presence. Your project should support larger numbers of people, although consideration will be given to those working intensively with smaller numbers.

## **12. Integrate with statutory services for delivery of autism supports, services and diagnoses**

You will need to demonstrate how your project will work with local provision of support to autistic adults. You will need to demonstrate how your project will work with local provision of support to autistic adults. Specifically, you will need to demonstrate that a relationship and plan for this work is in place with the local statutory service provider for autistic adults.

## **13. Have a clear sustainability strategy**

Funding is for financial year 2023/24 only and while there is no guarantee of funding, it is hoped that this fund will run on a recurring annual basis subject to Ministerial approvals as part of Scottish Government's annual budget process. You will need to provide a clear plan to progress the work at the end of the funding period.

# What you can spend the money on

## How much you can apply for

This funding is to cover project delivery costs and associated overheads for the period from October to March 2024. Small grants of between £15,000 and £30,000 are available to support smaller, grassroots, locally-based projects. Large grants of between £30,001 and £75,000 are available for national or regional projects.

## Revenue expenditure

As this is project funding, the expectation is that applications will be for revenue expenditure: the day-to-day operational costs that come from delivering the project. Requests for small amounts of capital funding to purchase or upgrade physical items essential to delivery of the project will be considered.

## Core costs

We recognise that delivering this project might require more core resource (e.g. you may have to bring on more staff and/or increase your internal operations). Therefore, we support full cost recovery in project budgeting. This means that your proposed budget should include overhead costs as well as direct project costs. We will fund a 10% contribution to core overhead costs in addition to project costs. You may find this [introduction to full cost recovery](#) helpful.

## Evaluation costs

Because capturing the learning on what worked is so important, you can include costs for resources to help you evaluate your activity. You can include costs that will help to review progress and monitor or map the journey of the project. This could be a contribution towards salary costs for a member of staff to monitor and evaluate the project or it could be reasonable costs towards external evaluation expertise to support you to gather evidence of the project's impact.

## Participation costs

We encourage you to consider what costs you need to budget for to ensure that there are no barriers to people participating in your project. These might include accessible venue spaces or communications materials, childcare, transport, or refreshments.



# How to apply

## Guidance notes and fund information

Please use these guidance notes to inform your application. In particular, you should ensure that your organisation is eligible to apply and that your project meets the fund criteria.

## Expression of interest and application

We want the application process to be simple and as accessible as possible. The standard application process is written and submitted online.

[Please submit an Expression of Interest through this link.](#)

Completing the Expression of Interest will give you access to:

- A link to the online application form where you submit your written application
- A Microsoft Word copy of the application questions, to help you prepare your application
- A copy of the budget template
- A copy of the Fund Information and Guidance Notes

When you have submitted your application, you will receive a confirmation email. Check your spam folder, and please get in touch with us if you have not received this email after submitting an application.

Please contact us directly at [autismenquiries@inspiringscotland.org.uk](mailto:autismenquiries@inspiringscotland.org.uk) to discuss any adjustments you may need us to make to support you to access this fund.

**Full applications must be submitted by 12pm on Wednesday, 13 September 2023.**

Applications after this time will not be accepted.

## Documents you will need

All applications will need to upload the following documents:

- Project budget
- Your organisation's constitution
- A copy of your organisation's most recent, signed Statutory Accounts
- *For partnership applications*, a copy of your partnership agreement(s) or MOU

Applications that do not include the documents above will be considered incomplete and will not be considered.

# Additional application notes and guidance

## Preparing your application

**Multiple applications:** Given the expected demand on funding, only one application per applicant will be accepted. Please contact us directly to discuss and obtain guidance on situations where you are considering submitting more than one application.

**Match funding:** This grant does not require match funding. However, if your total project cost exceeds the size of the grant you are applying for, you will be asked to explain how you have raised the additional funds.

## Planning your application

You can use a [Microsoft Word copy of the application form](#), including additional information on the questions, to help you plan your answers.

Please note that **we can only accept applications submitted through our online application process unless alternative arrangements have been agreed with us in advance**. If you wish to use the Microsoft Word template to draft your written application, you should copy and paste your answers into the online form to submit your application.

## Submitting your online application

**Read over the entire application form before answering questions:** To save you repeating information, we recommend you read all the questions before starting the form. Please gather the additional information and documents you may need to upload prior to starting the online form.

**Supplementary questions in the application form:** Some aspects of the application differ depending on how much money you are asking for. The online form will only show the questions relevant to your application. The Microsoft Word copy of the application form shows all questions and indicates who they are for.

**Maximum word limits:** Please note there are word limits to some questions. These limits are a guide only - the maximum limit does not need to be met. You will be unable to enter more than the maximum word limit. **Keep your answers short and to the point.** A clear and concise response that answers the question fully is much better than a long one.

**Formatting:** Please note that formatting (including bold text and bullet points) is not captured by our online form.

**What information to include:** We expect a high level of interest in this funding. Please consider this when completing your funding request and provide as much detail and clarity as possible. Be specific, ensure your application is clear and answers the question we are asking. We strongly recommend you draft and prepare your answers prior to completing the form online, and you may find it helpful to ask someone in your team to read over your application before you submit it.

# What happens after you apply

## How we will make decisions

We will take the following questions into account when assessing applications:

- Does the project support the Autistic Adult Support Fund outcomes?
- How have autistic people been involved in developing the project?
- Does the activity increase equity, diversity and inclusion?
- Does the applicant have the capacity itself or partnerships in place to be able to deliver the project?
- Does the project fit into and develop existing provision?
- Is the budget clear, well thought out and does it represent value for money?  
*and for applicants for large grants*
- Does the activity contribute to relevant national outcomes?
- Is there a sustainability plan for beyond the grant period?

## Successful applicants

1. If your application is successful, you will be notified by email. We will let you know when you can publicise the good news.
2. Your organisation will be asked to sign a grant agreement and provide us with bank account details and a recent bank statement. We will also ask for details of a finance contact for your organisation who can receive payment remittances and be able to account for how the funding has been spent.
3. Once this information has been received, we will pay your grant. Payments will be made in advance and will be spread over the duration of the project.
4. You will be asked to report at regular intervals on how you've spent the money and what difference the funding has made.

## Timelines

<b>Close for applications</b>	12pm on September 13th 2023
<b>Decisions to applicants</b>	October 2023
<b>End of project delivery and final evaluation report</b>	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024

# How to get more help and advice

If you have any questions when completing your application, you can email: [autismenquiries@inspiringscotland.org.uk](mailto:autismenquiries@inspiringscotland.org.uk).

## Video overview

To support organisations preparing applications and to help answer questions you may have, we have prepared a short video overview of the fund aims and application process. You can find this on the [webpage](#).

## Frequently Asked Questions

Please check the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#) on our website for more information you may find helpful. We will continue to add to the FAQs relevant questions and answers as they arise.

## Accessibility

We want this information and application to be as accessible to as many people as possible. If there are barriers to you accessing the Autistic Adult Support Fund information or application form please get in touch.

You can contact us by email: [autismenquiries@inspiringscotland.org.uk](mailto:autismenquiries@inspiringscotland.org.uk)

Or by telephone: **0131 442 8740**



Contact us via an online  
**Sign Language Interpreter**  
**Contact Scotland BSL**

You can also contact us through an online British Sign Language interpreter using [Contact Scotland BSL](#).

You may find the information on the Ability Net website: [mycomputermyway](#) useful in providing help on how to adapt your phone, computer or tablet to meet your needs.

# About Inspiring Scotland

Since 2008 Inspiring Scotland has worked towards a Scotland where everyone, no matter where they live, or the circumstances they are born into, is given the chance to enjoy a happy, healthy life free from poverty or disadvantage.

We believe Scotland's voluntary sector has a transformative effect on the lives of those living in Scotland who otherwise may struggle to make the best of their lives due to life circumstances, poverty, or other disadvantages. Our aim is to amplify and strengthen the impact of organisations across civic society by helping them build their strength, resilience, and reach.

We partner with entrepreneurs, businesspeople, philanthropists, charitable trusts, Scottish Government, local authorities and other public bodies to design and implement bold, long-term solutions – drawing on expertise and experience from across disciplines and sectors.

**INSPIRING SCOTLAND**

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