

# Questions and Answers for the Health and Social Care Volunteering Fund National Grant Scheme 2012

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We think you should consider the following 'questions and answers' before applying to the Health and Social Care Volunteering Fund National Grant Scheme.

We've broken the questions into sections:

- About the fund
- Application process
- Budget
- Selection process
- Application outcome

## About the fund

### 1.1 What is the Health and Social Care Volunteering Fund national grant scheme?

The Health and Social Care Volunteering Fund (HSCVF) national grant scheme is designed to support projects that are strategic and developmental in their approaches to volunteering in the health and social care sector. HSCVF aims to achieve impact at a strategic level across one of the four (Strategic Health Authority) SHA clusters with significant outcomes and impact.

Projects should operate across at least four delivery locations / local authorities that are geographically spread across their chosen SHA cluster. All applicant organisations need to work collaboratively with statutory health and / or social care commissioners to test volunteer-led approaches to provision that complement existing statutory services.

Commissioners' involvement in the project design will be required as well as a statement of their support for the proposed project.

This national local round of HSCVF funding aims to build on the success of the 2011 national grant scheme by reaching more local Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations. In 2011 a total of £2.06m was awarded to 13 successful projects, and a similar number will be supported in this round.

## Application process

### 1.2 Who can apply for the national grant scheme?

To apply to our programme you must:

- Be either:
  - ▶ a national VCSE organisation (VCSE organisations include co-operatives, mutuals and other not-for profit organisations with social aims)
  - ▶ a consortia of locality-based VCSE organisations or a consortia of national and locality-based VCSE organisations
  - ▶ In addition, the lead partner must have a minimum annual turnover of at least £200,000 per annum.
- Projects should operate across at least four delivery locations / local authorities that are geographically spread across their chosen SHA cluster.

For a full listing of eligibility criteria please read **should I apply** section?

### 1.3 How can I apply?

Before you can enter the application portal you must register your interest in the fund and check your eligibility online at [www.volunteeringfund.com](http://www.volunteeringfund.com) between **24th October** and **21st December**.

Once your registration is approved you will receive a user name and password to access the application portal and complete your application.

There is a two stage application process following registration:

1. First stage applications: Application portal opens **7th November 2011** and closes at noon on **18 January 2012**.
2. Second stage applications for shortlisted applicants: Application portal opens **12 March 2012** and closes at noon on **16 April 2012**.

Applicants who have scored sufficiently highly at Stage 1, and have the best fit with the programme priorities, will be invited to submit a Stage 2 application. Please be aware that applicants proceeding to Stage 2 will only receive notification in the week preceding the 12 March 2012 as we are trying to shorten the two stage application period as much as possible.

We anticipate high demand for the HSCVF national grants. There are likely to be more good quality applications than we are able to fund. Applications will be scored based on what we believe makes a good project and what best meets the priorities of the HSCVF programme. The DH will make the final decisions on successful applications.

#### **1.4 When can I register?**

The registration portal is now open and will remain open until the 21<sup>st</sup> December. No applications can be made prior registration. Please note that acceptance of your registration does not mean that you are likely to be funded.

#### **1.5 Do I need to be a national organisation can local/regional organisations apply?**

Each applicant should focus their activities in one of the four new Strategic Health Authority (SHA) clusters. (Subject to final confirmation of LA's in the cluster). Your project must operate across at least four diverse delivery locations / local authorities that are spread across the SHA cluster of their choice. The SHA clusters and the former SHAs covered by each new SHA cluster are as follows:

- NHS North of England: to include all Local Authorities in the North East, North West, Yorkshire and Humberside.
- NHS Midlands and East: to include all Local Authorities in the East Midlands, East of England and West Midlands.
- NHS South of England: to include all Local Authorities in the South West, South Central and South East Coast.
- NHS London: to include all Greater and inner London Boroughs.

Local/regional organisations are able to apply in partnership with other national/local/regional organisations to ensure the proposed project has the required reach; that is for projects to work across four or more delivery locations/local authorities within their chosen SHA cluster.

#### **1.6 Can I make more than one application?**

Each applicant organisation will be allowed to submit a maximum of one proposal. However, you can be involved as a partner or sub-contractor in other project applications.

## 1.7 Can partnerships apply?

If you choose to work in partnership, the lead applicant for your proposed project must be a voluntary, community or social enterprise organisation. We suggest, given the size of the fund that no more than three partners be involved in your bid as the more partners involved, the more complex the management will become. Please note that there is a 5% limit on HSCVF monies going to statutory or private sector organisations even where they are partners.

If you choose to work with other organisations as partners or subcontractors please be aware that a lead applicant is responsible for:

- the audit trail of the project as a whole (including your partners / subcontractors)
- submitting monitoring data for the project as a whole
- collecting and submitting monitoring data in a timely manner to the HSCVF managing agency as it is requested
- distributing all funds to partners / subcontractors
- vouching for partners / subcontractors eligibility
- undertaking to deal with any breaches of eligibility / audit or legal requirements amongst partners/ sub-contractors, including safeguarding, compliance with equality legislation etc.

## 1.8 My organisation is based and registered in Scotland / Wales / Northern Ireland. Can we apply?

Any activity to be funded must take place in England. Organisations based in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland can apply so long as the activity will take place in England. The fund is not available for activities that take place in Wales, Northern Ireland or Scotland. These administrations have their own devolved arrangements. Please contact us directly if this is the case.

## 1.9 What documents should I read before applying?

If you are deciding whether to apply you should read:

Information for applicants - National Grant Scheme 2012

For an understanding of the context of the fund please read:

The Health White Paper – Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS. To view a copy of this White paper click on this link: <http://bit.ly/c7Dfen>

The Vision for Adult Social Care: Capable Communities and Active Citizens. To view a copy of this White paper click on this link: <http://bit.ly/g9RgOh>

Healthy Lives, Healthy People: Our Strategy for Public Health in England. To view a copy of this White paper click on the link below: <http://bit.ly/pNEVO8>

The Fund's focus on encouraging volunteers, and delivering vital services through volunteering, also makes a significant contribution to the DH's Strategic Vision for Volunteering in Health and Social Care (launched 17 October 2011 and found at <http://bit.ly/qL2L8M>).

### **1.10 What are the strategic priorities for this fund?**

The HSCVF programme priorities have been developed so that funded projects can contribute to:

- DH Strategic Objectives – including the Vision for Adult Social Care, NHS strategic developments and developments in public health and mental health
- Enhancing the capacity and capability of health, public health and social care sector organisations at a neighbourhood level
- An improved volunteer experience through better recruitment and support for volunteers
- Working alongside new commissioning arrangements in health, public health and social care and
- The Big Society through delivery within localities and communities.

### **1.11 Are there any funding themes?**

The national grant scheme has four funding themes. Applicants should apply under one theme only. An overview of the themes is given below. More detailed information on the activity focus of each theme is outlined in Information for Applicants – National Grants 2012 Health and Social Care Volunteering Fund

#### **THEME 1: PERSONALISATION AND CHOICE OF CARE AND SUPPORT**

Projects that build and strengthen people's choice and control over their own care, with the support of volunteers, are sought under this theme.

#### **THEME 2: DELIVERING BETTER HEALTH AND CARE OUTCOMES**

Projects are sought that improve health and care outcomes through the support of volunteers. Applications that result in measurable reductions in health inequalities and improvements in life expectancy in disadvantaged groups are expected under this theme.

### THEME 3: IMPROVING PUBLIC HEALTH

Projects that improve public health through action to reduce inequalities in health, public health and social care through the integration of active volunteering initiatives in localities and communities are sought under this theme.

### THEME 4: IMPROVING HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Projects are sought that improve the accessibility and options, particularly through increasing citizen voice and advocacy, for long-term health and care by focusing on prevention, personalisation and partnership.

#### **1.12 Our organisation/ partnership works across all of the four themes. How should we apply?**

The theme relates to your proposed project not to your organisation. You should choose the *one theme* that most closely fits the project you are proposing.

#### **1.13 What is the purpose of the eligibility checklist?**

The checklist is designed for applicants to check their basic eligibility for the National Grant Scheme. It should be used in conjunction with the programme guidance notes.

#### **1.14 What sort of organisations/ partnerships will be eligible to apply for funding?**

Any voluntary, community or social enterprise organisation with an established track record wishing to run volunteering projects in the health, public health or social care sector will be able to apply for funding. Lead partners may work with voluntary or statutory sector organisations but they cannot be grant recipients.

#### **1.15 What are the Strategic Health Authority (SHA) clusters?**

From October 2011, clusters of strategic health authorities (SHA) will merge to support the transitional work both of the NHS Commissioning Board and of the NHS Trust Development Authority (which supports the formation of Foundation Trusts). These cluster together previous SHAs into four NHS Commissioning Board “sectors”:

NHS North of England (North East, North West and Yorkshire and Humber)

NHS South of England (South West, South Central and South East Coast)

NHS Midlands and East (West Midlands, East Midlands and East of England)

NHS London (all Greater and inner London Boroughs)

These SHA clusters will remain in place until the end of March 2013 and are intended to provide the "initial footprint" for the NHS Commissioning Board's commissioning sectors from April 2013. Once SHAs are abolished, many of their functions in relation to providing support to the emerging Clinical Commissioning Groups will transfer to the NHS Commissioning Board.

## **Budget**

### **1.16 What is the maximum or minimum grant my project can claim per annum?**

The minimum HSCVF grant available is £50,000 per annum.

The maximum HSCVF grant available is £200,000 per annum.

Each organisation's maximum funding limit will depend on its yearly income. The HSCVF monies cannot make up more than 25% of the lead organisation's yearly income.

### **1.17 What is the length of the grant period?**

The grant can be awarded for a maximum of 3 years, but projects can be funded for shorter periods. The grant allocation is subject to annual parliamentary approval.

### **1.18 What value of grants will be made available?**

The successful national projects will receive anything between £50,000 and £200,000 a year over a maximum funding period of 3 years. Each project will be assessed on its merits and will need to be based on realistic costs for activity, and the value for money provided in their proposed budgets. Projects that appear to be over costed may be asked to scale down or where under costed may be asked to scale up.

The HSCVF grant should not exceed 25% ( $\frac{1}{4}$ ) of the lead organisation's turnover in any one year based on your last set of published accounts as per the following examples:

If you apply for £200,000 in 2011/12; your turnover must be at least  $4 \times 200,000 =$  £800,000.

If you apply for £80,000 in 2011/12; your turnover must be at least  $4 \times 80,000 =$  £320,000

If you apply for £50,000 in 2011/12; your turnover must be at least  $4 \times 50,000 =$  £200,000.

**1.19 Why have you introduced the rule that grant funding is no more than 25% of our income?**

Our aim in introducing the 25% rule was to encourage more long-term projects and reduce the risk of organisations not being able to deliver the project outcomes. Our experience has been that if one grant is a high percentage of a lead organisation's income, they may find it difficult to cover core costs through full cost recovery. As a result, it could make the project proposal more risky. Over reliance on a grant can lead to lack of stability when the grant runs out, and we want to avoid this.

**1.20 Is there a limit to match funding money?**

No, but we will make an assessment of how the HSCVF will make a difference. We need to be clear where the HSCVF money is going, and what the outputs will be. We do not want HSCVF monies to be double counted with other funding or to be lost in a much larger pot of funds.

**1.21 Is HSCVF clean money for match funding purposes?**

Yes

**1.22 Do State Aid Rules apply?**

The Department of Health and the HSCVF consider it as unlikely that State aid would apply to any funding distributed under our grant schemes. It is the responsibility of each organisation seeking HSCVF funding to ensure their project does not contravene State aid rules. This information might help you determine this.

### 1.23 What is State aid?

State aid is a European Commission term which refers to forms of assistance from a public body, or publicly-funded body, given to undertakings on a discretionary basis, with the potential to distort competition and affect trade between member states of the European Union.

The 'State aid rules' are set out by the European Commission and comprise various articles of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), regulations, frameworks and guidelines - which set out what aid can be given. The European Commission governs member states' compliance with these rules and must be notified of all schemes involving State aid. State aid granted without Commission approval is viewed as unlawful and may be subject to repayment - by the aid recipient.

### 1.24 Do State aid rules apply to my organisation?

State aid rules only apply to organisations involved in economic activity ('undertakings'). The organisation does not have to be profit-making if the activity carried out is one which has commercial competitors. In some instances, public and voluntary sector organisations, such as universities and charities, could be classified as undertakings.

There are 5 criteria or questions which need to be considered in order to establish whether a measure constitutes State aid. Where all 5 criteria are met, State aid is involved and the State aid rules apply. Where 1 or more of the criteria appears not to be met, then funding is unlikely to constitute State aid. We recommend that you check with the State Aid Unit where any doubt exists – please see <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.berr.gov.uk/bbf/state-aid/> for further details.

#### 5 key questions

1. Is the measure granted by the state or through state resources? As well as central government departments, this includes regional or local authorities and other public, or private sector, bodies designated or controlled by the state. State resources include tax exemptions and also funds not permanently belonging to the state but under state control, e.g. lottery funding.
2. Does it confer an advantage to an undertaking? A benefit to an undertaking, granted for free or on favourable (non-commercial) terms, could be State aid. This includes the direct

transfer of resources, such as grants and soft loans, and also indirect assistance - for example, relief from charges that an undertaking normally has to bear, such as a tax exemption or the provision of services, loans, at a favourable rate.

3. Is it selective, favouring certain undertakings? Aid that targets particular businesses, locations, types of firm e.g. SMEs or sectors is considered selective. A general measure affecting the whole of the state's economy e.g. nation-wide fiscal measures is not considered a State aid.

4. Does the measure distort or have the potential to distort competition? If it strengthens the position of the beneficiary relative to other competitors then this criteria is likely to be met. The potential to distort competition does not have to be substantial or significant, and this criterion may apply to small amounts of aid and firms with little market share. Most interventions have the potential to distort competition.

5. Is the activity tradable between member states? The Commission's interpretation of this is broad - it is sufficient that a product or service is subject to trade between member states, even if the aid beneficiary itself does not export to the EU. Consequently most activities are viewed as tradable.

## Selection Process

### 1.25 What types of projects are we looking for?

A good application:

- Contributes to the new NHS commissioning structure.
- Is clearly supported by commissioners of health, public health and / or social care through evidence of meaningful arrangements for working strategically with them.
- Has a clearly discrete project that is easily identifiable as separate activity from what your organisation usually undertakes.
- Focuses on clearly defined aims, objectives and measurable outputs.
- Proves it will have an effect across the chosen SHA cluster, or the potential for it.
- Clearly describes what benefits the proposal will bring.
- Meets a proven need.
- Is clear about how the proposal contributes to DH strategic aims.
- Demonstrates how it contributes to the funding theme chosen.
- Shows that the project would not go ahead without HSCVF funding.
- Can show how all partners will add value to the project.
- Has a realistic strategy for longer-term funding (sustainability).
- Has clear evaluation and sufficient resources allocated to evaluation and strategies to pass on what has been learned.
- Is clearly different from any existing HSCVF national grant scheme project.

- Has a coherent project plan.
- Provides value for money.
- Has new ways of tackling old problems.

For an list of who/what we will not give grants to please see

<http://www.volunteeringfund.com/content/whowhat-we-will-not-give-grants>

#### **1.26 Is the money split evenly across each theme?**

No, but we will aim for a balanced portfolio of projects across the themes from amongst highly scoring bids.

#### **1.27 Do you fund pilot projects?**

Yes. They should integrate an element of evaluation to show how you can add value to projects in future.

### **Application outcome**

#### **1.28 Who will choose the successful projects?**

The projects with the best fit to the DH priorities will be funded, within the limits of the funding available in each year. The appraisal of bids will be carried out by experienced assessors, with appropriate knowledge of the health, public health and social care sector. There will be a strict quality control procedure on project appraisal, overseen by Ecorys staff who have many years of experience of appraisal of bids from statutory and third sector development funds. Feedback will be available to unsuccessful applicants. The final decisions on which organisations are funded will rest with the DH, with recommendations from Ecorys. Funding decisions will be final and cannot be appealed.

#### **1.29 Support – what will be provided?**

The HSCVF support package is delivered by nationally recognised voluntary organisations and is an optional requirement for national projects.

You do not have to pay for any of the activities offered in the Support Package (Organisation Diagnostic Tool; support consultancy; action learning sets, volunteer management training, online forum); although it would be sensible to make financial provision in your project budget for travel and subsistence for these events.

### **1.30 Who can I contact if I have further questions?**

You can contact the HSCVF team on 0845 172 8058 or by email on [volunteeringfund@uk.ecorys.com](mailto:volunteeringfund@uk.ecorys.com).

### **1.31 Can my bid be reassessed if I am unsuccessful?**

The decision on each bid is final and will not be reviewed unless the applicant agency has provided concrete evidence to the HSCVF managing body that their bid has been unfairly marked or that there is concrete evidence of an error on the part of the managing agency. In this instance the evidence will be reviewed and if considered necessary the bid will be remarked by a senior member of the company's management team who has no direct involvement in the management of HSCVF.

Remarking may not lead to funding being awarded however, and is no guarantee that the bid will reach the required threshold for funding. Each bidding round is highly competitive and the majority of bids received are not funded even where they have demonstrable strengths.

### **1.32 How will the appraisal of applications be carried out?**

The marking process for this fund is rigorous and objective. Each bid is marked by an experienced bid assessor, who has no connection with either the Department of Health or the HSCVF management team. They declare their independence from the bidding project and its staff before they proceed with their assessment of each bid. Any bid that reaches above a certain threshold that is determined by the volume of bids received and their quality is then second checked by another experienced and independent assessor. The scores are then finally checked and moderated by the core HSCVF team to ensure marking has been consistent and fair and to ensure there is a balance of health, public health and social care projects in the final list of projects recommended to the Department of Health for funding. The Department of Health considers the final list of recommended projects from this process and then funding is awarded.

### 1.33 What are the monitoring requirements?

Please see our guidance on managing your national projects 2011 (this can be found here - <http://bit.ly/sJGEVT>) for an idea on the monitoring requirements for national projects.