

# Darlington Champions

## Information for group applicants

- These guidelines and our group application form are available by post, Email, on PC disk, or through our website. They are also available in large print format.
- You may also be able to collect an application form from your local Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) office or the local Community Empowerment Networks in Derwentside, Easington, Sedgefield or Wear Valley.
- Please let us know if you need assistance in completing an application form, for example if you have special needs or if English is not your first language.

Do not send in your application if you will not be available to speak to us during the next month. Your application will be acknowledged within a week of receipt if it is returned with the acknowledgement postcard (correctly stamped), which is included in the application pack. Most applications take up to two months from start to finish. If your application is for less than £1,000 you may receive a decision much sooner than this.

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Charity no: 1047625 Company no: 3072153 Entrust no: 581043

## What is County Durham Foundation?

County Durham Foundation is an independent local charity called a community foundation that aims to improve the quality of life for people in County Durham and Darlington by channelling funds to grass roots communities. All of our grants are funded by direct donations to County Durham Foundation or by the interest generated and any capital growth from our endowment funds. Individuals, families, companies, statutory agencies and other trusts set up these funds, which support a wide variety of causes and we match applications to grant programmes.

### Our Values

- Making our criteria understandable and accessible whilst supporting applicants to make the best application possible.
- Being transparent about our processes and, where possible, engaging local people and the fund holders in making the final decision.
- Making grants that are relevant to local need and have a direct impact on the community.
- Supporting projects that help people to help themselves.
- Ensuring that all applications are treated fairly and undergo a seven-stage assessment process.
- Ensuring that all grants given are measurable and that successful applicants are aware of our expectations.
- Supporting applicants in line with the donor's expectations and criteria.
- Aiming to assess all complete applications within 8 weeks.

## What does County Durham Foundation support?

County Durham Foundation awards grants to community and voluntary organisations that are charitable, educational, philanthropic or benevolent in purpose. You do not have to be a registered charity. Most successful applications are from user-led, self-help projects that can show real community support and demonstrable benefits. We particularly like to see applications from groups working in the following areas:

- **Children and young people** – groups and projects that help children and young people access activities and services where they play a key role in the decision-making.
- **Vulnerable people** – groups and projects working with disadvantaged people, in particular providing increased access to services and facilities for people with disabilities, the homeless and the elderly.
- **Community regeneration** – local partnerships plus residents and tenants associations that aim to improve health, education, reduce crime levels (and improve community safety) and to regenerate employment, housing and the physical environment with the support of their local community.
- **Self-help groups** – community based, small self-help groups who deliver basic services.

- **Environmental improvements** – small-scale environmental projects particularly improvements to community held land.
- **Education, capacity and skills development** – group and community-based-training and education programmes, particularly for those who have had no previous access to training opportunities.
- **Health** – groups and community based projects providing access to healthy eating, increased physical activity and self-help services, which aim to improve the health and well being of communities.

In particular, we would like to attract applications from groups working in rural areas.

## Which programme should I apply to?

Our grant programmes are listed on the enclosed flyer headed '*Summary of Grant Programmes*'.

Your application will be allocated to a grants programme and you will be notified if this is different from the programme indicated on your application form. Do not worry if you do not know which fund you are applying to as we match applications to the most appropriate fund for your project.

Each of our grants programmes has a different upper limit (please see the Summary) but the amount actually available to you will depend on where your project is based and who the beneficiaries are.

Grants from County Durham Foundation can be used as match funding unless expressly excluded in the offer letter we send you. Grants from County Durham Foundation should cover at least 50% of the total project cost.

You may hold grants up to the maximum amount for each grant programme in each financial year (April to March), assuming your projects fit the criteria. However groups that haven't already received a grant will be given greater priority from that programme.

## How long is the funding for?

Our grants are for one year maximum i.e. you cannot apply for more than 12 months' costs. You may however receive one year's funding from us, and then apply for more the following year. Applications from groups who have not had a grant before may be given greater priority so if you are looking for repeat funding do not assume that you will be successful.

## What information are we looking for?

When completing your application form remember that you need to demonstrate that your project or activity fulfils the following criteria. Please try to include as much information about each of these as possible:

**Evidence of need:** How do you know that the project is needed? Have you done any research? Has the project been requested by users of your group? Are there any people that are excluded from using your services at present, and if so why?

**Evidence of community use:** How many people currently use your services and how many are likely to use any new services?

**Evidence of community involvement:** How many people are involved with the running of your organisation including people who help out with fund raising or volunteering?

**Value for money:** You should include quotes for any equipment that you are looking to purchase and for any repairs or building works that you are hoping to carry out. It is always advisable to obtain quotes from at least two sources. You should ensure that your budget is realistic and that costings are as accurate as possible.

## What do I need to send with my application?

We will not assess your application until we have received all the necessary signed paperwork. Failure to include all items will delay or invalidate your application. You will be sent a letter requesting any missing information, which will include a deadline for its return. If you fail to return the missing information by the requested date (without contacting the office and giving us a valid reason why you cannot do so) we will reject your application. Please ensure you use the correct stamps - most application forms with enclosures weigh enough to cost between 50p and £1.00 (second class post).

**As well as the completed application form, you must send to us:**

- 1. A copy of your organisation's governing document:** This may be a simple set of rules, a constitution or memorandum and articles of association. Your group's management committee **MUST** sign the document. You should have a volunteer committee with a Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer and at least two other committee members. You do not need to be a registered charity.

Your constitution should be open and it should not include any clause that could benefit an individual or a group of individuals. Your organisation should operate with regard to equal opportunities best practice and this should be reflected in your constitution.

- 2. A copy of your organisation's most recent accounts:** If you have been running for over one year we would expect to see a full set of accounts showing a breakdown of your annual income, expenditure and carry-forward balance.

If you are a new group (less than 12 months old), a recent bank statement plus an annual budget/cash flow forecast showing estimated income and expenditure is acceptable. Before sending these documents ensure that they have been signed and authorised by your Treasurer.

If you do not have a bank account it is possible for you to nominate another organisation to receive payment on your behalf. The nominated organisation should be willing to provide confirmation that they are able to ring-fence your grant within their own accounts. You should ensure that cheque signatories are not related in any way.

Remember that County Durham Foundation will not fund organisations that are holding more than one year's running costs or £15k as free reserves. If your organisation has high free reserves you should ensure that you explain what these are for and why we should give you a grant (and you cannot pay for it yourself) when submitting your application.

- 3. A copy of your child protection policy:** If your organisation works with children or young people (under 19 years), or the activity you are applying for will involve working with children or young people, you will need to provide a copy of your child protection policy. An adequate child protection policy should include procedures for the following: Named person responsible for implementing the policy and preferably a nominated deputy; Safe recruitment; Induction and training for staff and volunteers; Appropriate reporting; Health and safety and insurance details. If you do not have a policy, we can offer you training to develop one. You can be offered a grant but cannot receive it until your management committee have adopted an acceptable child protection policy.
- 4. Vulnerable persons policy:** If your organisation works with vulnerable people aged 18 years or over you should include a copy of your organisation's policy. The definition of a vulnerable adult is a person who is or who may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of himself or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation. The range of vulnerable adults can involve people with physical (including sensory loss), mental health or learning disabilities.
- 5. Postcode:** You should include the postcode of the area in which your group is based and works and if applicable a postcode for the area where the project will take place if this is different from your group's address.
- 6. Details of an independent referee:** This should be someone who knows about your organisation, but who is not on the committee, a volunteer or a user of your group. This could be a member of the clergy, a policeman, councillor or a professional local resident who knows your group and its activities well.

If your application is for a project working with children or young people or vulnerable adults, the referee should be knowledgeable about child protection issues and be prepared to vouch that the group either has a child protection policy in place that is updated regularly or is in the process of developing one.

- 7. Environmental:** If your project is for environmental improvements, you must know who will maintain your site after completion of the project and have permission from the landowner or landlord. Evidence of the landowner or landlord's permission must be included (i.e. a letter). You must also enclose a location plan showing where your project will take place, as a minimum sketch plans of the site and planned improvements plus photographs of the proposed site (with your group's name on the back). If your project is large scale or particularly complex you should consider taking professional advice, as we will require more detailed plans. We encourage the use of re-cycled materials and the planting of native species of trees and shrubs in all environmental improvement projects.

## Guidance

If your group does not have all of these policies in place, County Durham Foundation has free guidance notes on developing these, which are available from the office. We would strongly advise that you contact your local Council for Voluntary Service, contact details for which are included at the end of these guidance notes.

It is always worth calling us to find out if your group is eligible before you complete the application form.

## What we will not fund

### Never

- Projects outside County Durham and Darlington.
- Groups that have more than one year's running costs held as free reserves.
- Statutory responsibilities (i.e. projects which should be funded by a statutory body).
- Sponsored events.
- National or regional charities with no independent office in County Durham or Darlington.
- Improvements to land that is not open to the general public at convenient hours.
- Projects promoting political activities.
- Deficit or retrospective funding (i.e. grants for activities which have already taken place).
- Faith groups promoting religious, non-community based activities.

### Not Normally

- Animal welfare.
- General contributions to large appeals (but specific items can be funded).
- Medical research and equipment.
- Grants for more than one year.
- School projects.
- Building or buying premises and freehold or leasehold land rights.
- Minibuses or other vehicles and overseas travel.

If your project fits into one of categories in the **Not Normally** section you should contact the office before sending in your application. In exceptional circumstances, we will award grants outside these criteria at the request of one of our fund holders.

## Assessment

A grants assessor will contact you to discuss your project and organisation, so do not send us your application if you will be away for the following month. Let us know if you will be away for a few days and include a daytime contact number. Your assessment should take a maximum of ½ an hour. Please ensure that the person named on the application form knows about the project and can talk knowledgeably about it. We will also look at your accounts, your constitution and any other available literature and reserve the right to ask you to submit further information in support of your application. A short factual report on your project will be produced and circulated to the relevant Grants Committee who will consider your request and make a decision.

## Grants committees

Different programmes have different grants committees; many of these committees involve local people and are district-based. They make a decision about the outcome of your application. On average they meet every two months, although decisions for applications up to £1,000 may be made much quicker than this.

## Grant offers and the right to appeal

- All offer or refusal letters will be sent within 3 working days of a grant committee meeting. Please do not ring the office to find out whether your application has been successful or not.
- Offer letters will include any additional conditions imposed by the committee.
- A grant condition form will be sent, which must be signed and returned to County Durham Foundation's office before payment is made.
- You **MUST** not commit any money before you have received your offer letter and conditions.
- Should you need to request a change of use for any award made, you **MUST** submit your request in writing to County Durham Foundation. Do not commit any expenditure until we have confirmed in writing to you that your request is acceptable. We attempt to be flexible but this may not be possible in all cases.
- Details of all grants made will be published quarterly on our website.
- If your application is unsuccessful, we will tell you why. You can apply for a different project, but you cannot re-apply for the same project unless your rejection letter says so.
- If you feel you have been treated unfairly (i.e. you perceive that we have failed to take account of relevant information or have based our assessment on inaccurate information), you can appeal in writing to the Senior Operations Manager who will consider your request. You must include evidence to back up your appeal. You cannot appeal just because you do not like our decision – remember we cannot fund every deserving application. If necessary the application can be referred back to the original grants committee that declined the application. If following this process the application is still declined then there is no further right to appeal.

## Why are applications rejected?

The most common reason that applications are rejected/not processed is that the applicant has failed to include all the relevant documentation and/or has failed to forward documentation despite requests to do so. Other reasons include:

- Failure to demonstrate the group's ability to deliver a project.
- Management committee is not sufficiently representative of the community or their users.
- Failure to show sufficient community involvement.
- Failure to show sufficient need for the project.
- No indication of how the project/activity will be funded after the grant has run out.
- Not value for money.
- The group applying has too high free reserves.
- County Durham Foundation has insufficient funds for a particular type of project or geographical area.

## Individuals

County Durham Foundation holds a number of funds that support individuals. In particular we have funds that support people with Cerebral Palsy and young people who are or have been in care. Each fund has its own specific criteria, which you must meet in order to apply. These are detailed in separate application forms and guidance notes which are available by post from the office and via our website.

## Where can I get advice?

If you need help in completing the application form or sorting out your constitution and accounts, please contact your local Council for Voluntary Service:

**CAVOS (Sedgefield)**, Newton Aycliffe  
Telephone: (01325) 307219

**Chester-le-Street CVS & VB**  
Telephone: (0191) 3891960

**Darlington CVS**  
Telephone: (01325) 266888

**Durham Rural Community Council**  
Telephone: (0191) 529621

**Derwentside CVS & VB**, Stanley  
Telephone: (01207) 218855

**Durham City CVS**  
Telephone: (0191) 3844801

**2D (Wear Valley & Teesdale)**, Crook  
Telephone: (01388) 762220

**Easington CVS**  
Telephone: (0191) 5865427

You can also contact your local Community Empowerment Network if you are applying to either the Neighbourhood Renewal Community Chest or Community Learning Chest programmes.

**Easington Community Network**  
Norman Mackie: Telephone: 0191 527 3333

**Derwentside Community Network**  
Rose Seabury: Telephone: 01207 281107

**Sedgefield Community Network**  
Anne Frizzell: Telephone: 01325 307219

**Wear Valley Community Network**  
David Craggs: Telephone: 01388 762 220