

Financial Inclusion Fund 2024/25– Invitation to bid

The Council has, for several years, funded innovative projects that promote the aims of its Financial Inclusion Steering Group. The Group is a partnership that brings together leading Councillors, senior representatives from across the Council's Directorates and representatives of Citizens Advice York, Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust, Community First Credit Union, York CVS, York Explore, the York Food Justice Alliance and the Welfare Benefits Unit to help coordinate the council's approach to promoting and delivering Financial Inclusion.

The group's purpose is:

'To ensure that local people have the knowledge of and access to appropriate services, allowing them to make more informed choices to achieve and maintain financial stability'.

The main focus of the group is specifically to:

1. Equip individuals with the knowledge and skills to improve and manage their lives by providing clear, coordinated advice and information, and to support them in an increasingly turbulent economic environment to make the right choices to bring about financial stability.
2. Increase the awareness and understanding of the benefits system and to improve access to services.
3. Align and co-ordinate existing activity and target areas of need.
4. Agree measures aimed at reducing the cost of living for those in poverty for food, fuel, childcare and white goods and furniture.

Significant investment has been made in a range of projects over recent years and several projects are currently funded through to 31 March 2024.

Bids for 2024/25

Bids are now invited for funding from April 2024 for innovative one-year projects that deliver our objectives and will make a real difference to people's lives particularly at a time when residents finances are under increasing pressure in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis. Subject to approval of the Council's budget on Feb 22nd, there could be up to £50,000 available.

We are looking to fund between 4 – 8 applications up to a maximum of £12,000.

Applications will be considered Schemes that have longer term sustainability, match funding and joint working are particularly welcome.

Helping to secure and support the financial well-being of our citizens should be at the heart of any projects that we fund.

We are looking to support work in the City that promotes financial inclusion and seeks

- to mitigate the hardship impacts felt as a result of the cost-of-living crisis.
- support for residents claiming eligible benefits including, Universal Credit, pension Credit and Council Tax Support
- tackling food & fuel poverty
- helping those who are, or at risk of becoming, homeless
- embedding advice services into the community
- supporting digital inclusion
- empowering individuals in communities to help themselves and help others longer term
- providing support and help 'hard to reach' groups and individuals within the community
- particularly supporting those with additional health needs and disabilities.

Successful bids will:

- have a focus on outcomes
- be specific, measurable and achievable in the period of the funding
- be delivered in the heart of our communities and
- complement our [Council Plan for 2023 - 27](#).

To bid for funding please complete and return the attached Business Case template to wbpartnership@york.gov.uk by **9am on Monday 11 March 2024**

For questions or queries about the application process please contact

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