Community Mental Health Transformation
Grant Programme 2
Guidance Document

This Guidance Document accompanies the Community Mental Health Transformation Grant Programme 2 (2026–2027) **Application Form** for York's Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations.

This should be read in conjunction with **'How we will assess applications'**. This document provides information on how your application will be assessed.

If you require documents in an alternative format, please let us know.

Email: grants@yorkcvs.org.uk **Phone:** 01904 621133 (extension 1006) leave a message and we'll get back to you!

Note: Please use the resources, guidance and get in touch if you have questions to support you to apply. If your application has been completed incorrectly this could result in your application being rejected.

Introduction and background

The Community Mental Health Transformation Grant Programme 2 builds on York's 2023–2025 initiative, offering £250,000 in funding for innovative two-year projects (up to £40,000 each) led by the city's Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Sector.

The funding aim is to improve mental health and wellbeing by supporting initiatives shaped by lived experience and evolving community needs. York's VCSE Sector brings deep local knowledge and trusted relationships, offering diverse approaches to mental wellbeing.

This grant is part of the NHS Community Mental Health Transformation, delivered locally by the York Mental Health Partnership and the 'Connecting Our City' Partnership. York CVS has been commissioned to manage the grant distribution.

What is the 'Connecting Our City' Project?

'Connecting Our City' is a partnership vision for improving mental health and wellbeing in York. It began in 2021 when a group of representatives from across health, social care, the VCSE Sector as well as people with lived experience of mental health services, families and carers came together.

They set a vision for York as a city where:

- We all feel valued by our community, connected to it, and can help shape it.
- We are enabled to help ourselves and others, build on our strengths, and can access support with confidence.
- We are proud to have a Mental Health Service that is built around our lives, listens to us, is flexible and responds to all our needs.

Through the transformation funding 'Connecting our City' has funded and supported a number of VCSE organisations including peer support, co-production, carer support, the Community Mental Health Transformation Grant Programme 1 and the Community Mental Health Hub work.

The aim of this grant is to build on, link in and work alongside the work that is already happening in York through the 'Connecting our City' transformation funding.

Resources:

- Information on place-based community mental health model NHS England » The community mental health framework for adults and older adults
- Connecting our city Video - Connecting Our City
- The NHS Community Mental Health Transformation Video

Other resources for Connecting our City:

- Hub and Connecting our City Principles and Overview
- **York Mental Health Hub - to find out information on the Hub:** York Mental Health Hub (@yorkmentalhealthhub) • Instagram photos and videos

Community Mental Health Transformation Grant Programme 1 funded projects:

- [Video of programme 1 funded projects](#)
- [Press release of programme 1 funded projects](#)

Health Inequalities:

- [Core20PLUS5 (adults) – an approach to reducing healthcare inequalities](#)
- [York Population Health Hub website](#)
- [Health inequalities in York – Core20PLUS profile for adults](#)

Is your project eligible?

Do you meet the following eligibility criteria?

- A Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisation
- Ready to apply, with appropriate governance, policies and procedures in place
- Delivering support to people living within the City of York Council area
- Primarily supporting adults aged 18 and over. However, projects that support younger adults aged 16 and over - particularly those in transition to adulthood - will also be considered.
- The project will be delivered over a two-year period

An eligibility checklist is included in **Section 2, Q4.** of the [application;](#) your organisation must be able to meet **ALL** criteria within this section.

If your project does not meet the eligibility criteria, then please talk to us. We have other support within [York CVS](#) that can help develop your projects and provide support.

Please talk to us and leave enough time if you do want to apply or have any questions.

Documents to submit with your application:

As part of your submission, you are required to send the following documents with your application:

- Governing document
- Safeguarding policy and procedure

These documents will be used as part of the eligibility and due diligence assessment.

Details of how these documents will be used is outlined below:

Governing document/registration checks:

- Is the legal status of the organisation appropriate?
- Is the organisation registered with the appropriate body and up to date with legal returns e.g. to Charity Commission / Companies House (if applicable)?

Safeguarding policy and procedure:

Do they include:

- Definitions of abuse and signs of abuse included
- Details of local safeguarding board / who to contact within the organisation
- Details of when DSB checks should be carried out
- What safeguarding training is in place

If these areas are covered in other policies/procedures please advise when submitting your application and include those documents as well.

Funding Criteria

Does your project meet the grant aims?

Grant Core Criteria Aims

Projects **MUST** align with **ALL** the following aims:

- **Projects that are rooted in communities and shaped by the needs of individuals, drawing on preventative, recovery-focused, and trauma-informed approaches as appropriate.** *We recognise that no single model fits all, and encourage work that is flexible, person-centred, and responsive to diverse experiences.*

- **To deliver transformational and innovative approaches** *that enhance support for individuals and communities.*
  We welcome applications for projects that bring transformational and innovative change, even when building on existing work. The key is to meet the criteria in a way that strengthens, not compromises, the sustainability of what you already do.
- **To ensure accessibility for people with Serious Mental Illness (SMI)**, *promoting inclusion and equity in service delivery*
- **To align with and contribute to the Connecting our City Hubs, Approach, and Principles**, *strengthening integration with the wider programme*

Use the resources in the useful information and resources section which provides more details on the Connecting our City work, the Hubs and Principles.

Grant Desirable Criteria Aims

Project activity **MUST** specifically address **at least one** of the following areas:

- **Supporting underserved communities** - *including work that specifically focuses on addressing health inequalities and supports minority or marginalised groups*
- **Overcoming travel and geographical barriers** - *such as initiatives in rural areas, outreach efforts, or solutions to transport challenges*
- **Providing out-of-hours support** - *including services available during evenings, weekends, or outside traditional operating times*

The grant programme priorities are to fund projects that meet unmet needs across the city by providing accessible mental health support. This includes work that tackles health inequalities and supports marginalised groups, outreach in rural or isolated areas to overcome transport barriers, and services available during evenings, weekends, or outside traditional hours.

If none of the above align with your project, please contact us to discuss further.

Application process – what to expect and when

Milestone	Date (2025)
Launch	Wednesday 3rd September
Support online drop in sessions	**Check dates and book on Eventbrite**
Closing date for applications	Wednesday 22nd October (12pm)
Panel decisions shared with applicants	Early December
Funds paid to successful applicants	By 31st December

If my application is successful, what happens next?

- We will ask you for evidence to verify your bank account, and that the signatories are not related
- We will send you some forms to complete and return (including an agreement and a finance form)
- You will have around one week to return the completed forms
- We process the paperwork, then instruct our finance department to make the grant payments

Tips - Dos and Don'ts

Do	Don't
• Complete every section (or your application won't be accepted) • Write in Arial size 14 font • Try and use bullet points – we don't need everything in full sentences • Keep your writing simple, clear, concise & jargon-free • Submit your application as a Word document (or your application will not be accepted) • Use the available guidance, documents and resources to support your application	• WRITE IN ALL CAPS (it's harder to read) • **Write in all bold** (it's harder to read) • Exceed the word limits • Write an essay (we aren't assessing your grammar) • Submit your application as a PDF • Not ask questions – please do get in touch and make sure you leave enough time

When is the closing date for applications?
Wednesday 22nd October 12pm

What is the maximum we can apply for?
£40,000 over two years (max £20,000 each year)

Your budget should reflect the true costs of your project and be as realistic and precise as possible. Costs may vary each year, and Year 2 may include any necessary cost increments.

Can we submit our application in a different format?
Yes, please get in touch to discuss further.

Can current projects/organisations already receiving funding from Connecting our City apply for this funding?
This would be reviewed as part of the panel decision stage and looked at on a case-by-case basis.

Do applications have to be for new projects?
No. We are happy to consider applications for funding that allows existing work to continue - however, one of the main aims is for your project/work to be transformational and innovative - please look carefully at the criteria in the **application** and **guidance** document. We do not want people to create something new simply for the sake of applying; or to start adding in new elements that will make existing work unsustainable.

What is the definition of Serious Mental Illness (SMI)?
Serious Mental Illness (SMI) is defined as someone over the age of 18 who has (or had within the past year) a diagnosable mental, behavioural, or emotional disorder that causes serious functional impairment that substantially interferes with or limits one or more major life activities.

How will you assess applications?
Please refer to the document titled **'How we will assess applications'**. It outlines how your application will be evaluated, including which specific questions will be scored.

To strengthen your submission, make sure to also follow the guidance provided within each question in the application form.

What do you mean by the term 'project'?

It means the work you intend to deliver with the grant you are seeking from us.

Must applying organisations have an annual income within a certain range?
No. There is no upper or lower limit, but we may ask for further financial information to support your application if necessary.

What are the reporting requirements?
Reporting is expected to be at 6 months, 12 months, and 24 months. You may also be asked to provide some additional information as part of the second-year funding review. Further details will be shared with successful applicants as part of the grant agreement.

Is my project eligible?
Read the Funding Criteria section detailed above and refer to the Application form.

Can we apply as a collaborative?
Yes. We encourage partnership working and collaborative proposals, though you must appoint a lead organisation on the application form and provide additional details on roles and responsibilities in a separate document.

What costs can be included as part of our budget?
You can apply for core costs and / or project costs.
Here are some examples of what your costs might include. It is not an exclusive list:
- Staffing costs
- Training for volunteers
- Admin / research / evaluation time
- Session delivery / facilitation
- Insurance
- Set-up costs
- Equipment and/or storage
- Materials
- Refreshments
- Postage and stationery
- Venue hire
- Printing/leaflets/publicity
- Transport for participants
- Subscriptions / fees / memberships (e.g. a Zoom account)
- DBS checks (if necessary)

Do you accept applications from statutory services (schools, prisons, hospitals etc)?

No. We cannot accept applications from statutory services.

We can consider joint applications that are a partnership between a VCSE organisation and a statutory organisation. The VCSE organisation must be the lead partner.

Should we send policies with our application?

Please only send the following required documents** with your application:

- Governing document
- Safeguarding policy and procedure

Please don't send any other additional documents with your application form (unless we have asked you to).

**If the required information is covered in other policies/procedures please advise when submitting your application and include those documents as well.

Can we submit our application in an Easy Read Format?

Yes, you can submit your application in an easy read format as long as you provide all the information requested on the application form.

Do all volunteers need DBS checks?

No. It depends on their role, namely if they'll be volunteering with children / vulnerable adults / 1 to 1 / in a group setting etc. These resources provide more information:

- **Factsheet**
- **Find out which DBS check is right for your employee - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)**
- **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) — NCVO Knowhow**

Still have questions?

- Read our **Webpage**
- Read the **Application Form**
- Read the **'How we will assess applications'**

Talk to us...

If you have any question about the grant criteria, applying and completing the application form, or about the guidance please get in touch, there is no such thing as a 'stupid' question – we are here to help!

Look out for the dates of the 'Support Online Drop-in Sessions' and BOOK ON

Contact Us

Email: grants@yorkcvs.org.uk

Phone: 01904 621133 (extension 1006) – leave a message and we will get back to you!