



## Norfolk Early Childhood Community Fund Guidance for Parent and Toddler Groups

Norfolk County Council launched a new Community Fund worth £250,000 each year in October 2019, giving organisations and groups the chance to bid for up to £2,500 to support them to meet the needs of 0-5's and their parents.

The Community Fund is part of the County Council's new approach to supporting local communities to enable families to build their own networks of support. This requires there to be a range of locally run community groups and activities for families with children aged 0-5.

Making sure there are sufficient opportunities for families locally and that services are working well together is being overseen by new Early Childhood Advisory Boards (ECABs) in each district. The lived experience of parents and carers will be an integral part of ECABs alongside the contribution of local partner agencies. parents as partners alongside local agencies.

### The Early Childhood Community Fund is made up of 3 strands

**Strand 1. New provision/Capacity building grant** - up to £2,500 per group to fund the start up of new groups or to expand existing groups. The focus of this strand is to develop new networks of support and build capacity in communities for parents and carers of children aged 0-5.

**Strand 2. Covid 19 Recovery grant** - up to £500 per group to fund existing parent and toddler groups to make necessary changes and provisions to enable them to reopen and minimise risk of Covid 19. This grant can be used for the purchase of good quality toys and equipment that can be cleaned effectively and regularly or to make modifications to settings where the group operates. **This grant will be available until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.**

**Strand 3. Early Childhood Advisory Board- Priority Projects-** Each of the 7 district Early Childhood Advisory Boards have a small allocated budget to identify and commission local projects that will make a difference locally and improve outcomes within the district based on locally defined priorities. These will be developed from local intelligence, data and knowledge from Advisory Board members including parents and carers.

### Who will make the decisions about which applications are supported?

**For strands 1 and 2** - a grants panel has been established to consider applications that will consist of representatives from the county council's Achievement and Early Years Service, our Community and Partnership teams and our Commissioning team,.

### For strand 3

Decisions will be made by the members of the district Early Childhood Advisory Board.

## Who can apply?

### Strands 1 and 2

#### The Early Childhood Community Fund will support activities/groups that: -

- involve parent and children aged 0-5 attending activities together which provide social and developmental opportunities
- are run by members of the community or community organisations  
The fund is intended to support the development of community capacity working within local communities to develop sustainable networks of support embedded within local contexts. You can access advice in setting up an activity/ group in this way. Registered Early Years settings are welcome to apply however the community fund will not pay for staff costs (salaries) which must be covered by other income such as fees.
- are run from local community venues, close to where parents live; particularly in rural and isolated communities
- may be free or have a nominal charge

To ensure that the group is affordable to families, whilst ensuring it will become self-sustaining, it is expected that fees are kept as low as possible or free. Where there is no charge, we would encourage the group to consider asking families for a voluntary contribution to support sustainability. Applications should clearly demonstrate how they have arrived at the fee charged and all costs (including venue hire) detailed using the table in the application form whilst detailing how efforts will be made to ensure it is accessible to all families.

- operate an open access / universal and inclusive activity/group (i.e. not targeted or where individuals must be referred by a professional)

This funding is for activities/groups that operate for children aged 0-5 alongside their parent/carers. Funding will be awarded to activities/groups that plan to become self-sustaining or are for a fixed period or purpose.

**Only one application can be awarded per organisation per financial year. The maximum funding available per organisation is £2,500 for Strand 1 to increase capacity and £500 for Strand 2 to support Covid 19 recovery. This can be used for one or more activities/groups that take place in a one or more locations.**

#### We want to support community groups and activities that will help:

- Support children aged 0-5 to achieve their developmental milestones (Communication and Language, Personal Social and Emotional development, Physical development)
- Prevent more children aged 0-5 from experiencing neglect or emotional harm
- Increase social mobility

#### Strand 1 will fund

- Start-up of new activities/groups or increasing capacity of an existing parent and toddler group (e.g extra session or day to allow more families to attend)
- Access to training for volunteers who run the group/activity run through NSCB, Voluntary Norfolk, NCC (e.g. Safeguarding Children, Health and Safety, Food Hygiene)
- Membership of Norfolk Safer programme
- Resources appropriate for children aged 0-5 years to access in a group environment  
You will need to provide us with a list of the equipment with costs of that you intend to purchase with the total shown on the application form
- Initial set up costs i.e. equipment
- Public liability and employer's liability insurance as appropriate

- Marketing and promotional materials  
You will need to provide us with detailed costs for marketing
- Venue hire up to a maximum of 6 months  
You will need to provide us with venue costs and how you have arrived at the figure in your application.

### Strand 2 will fund

- good quality toys and equipment that can be cleaned effectively and regularly
- room dividers/furniture that will enable spaces to be managed into smaller areas to minimise infection transfer.
- other items to minimise risk to support the reopening of the group
- outstanding costs incurred during lockdown which would prevent the group from reopening.

### What we won't fund

- Long term venue costs
- Resources not appropriate for a group setting
- Staffing costs
- Capital works
- Resources or equipment for existing groups that are not increasing their capacity to allow more families to attend (except Covid-19 Recovery grant) (We may be able to signpost existing groups to other sources of funding for this purpose.)
- an activity/group which solely promotes party political views or religious beliefs or philosophy or solely delivers services for religious purposes\*

\*Faith-based bodies and religious organisations are eligible to apply and we recognise they make a significant contribution to the well-being of society. We would expect any group we fund to be transparent to reassure us that the funds will not primarily be used to promote specific religious activities. Religious organisations providing public services are subject to the requirements of discrimination law in the same way as other organisations.

### Criteria

#### The organisation must have: -

- a bank account with at least 2 officers/signatories that are unrelated and not cohabiting
- group leaders with an Enhanced DBS check
- ensured that group leaders have accessed the following: -
  - Safeguarding Children training
  - Paediatric First Aid training
 (or a willingness to undertake these prior to the group commencing)
- Commitment for the following to be in place prior to commencement of group
  - Public liability and Employer's liability insurance as appropriate
  - Risk assessments of the venue and ongoing process for carrying out future assessments
  - With consent from families, commitment to refer to ECFS for appropriate support where identified need
  - Registration on to the Norfolk Community Directory

Where required, we will offer organisations support to develop their ideas and get things up and running. We can work with you to develop this prior to completing a full application. Support can also be provided to register on to the Norfolk Community Directory.

<https://communitydirectory.norfolk.gov.uk>

## IMPORTANT

It is the responsibility of the applicant to complete and provide **all** the required information for panel. The application must be completed in full, signed by an authorised signatory and submitted by the deadline. Applications received after the submission date will not be considered until the next panel.

Application deadline	Grants panel
13 <sup>th</sup> August	27 <sup>th</sup> August
10 <sup>th</sup> September	24 <sup>th</sup> September
8 <sup>th</sup> October	22 <sup>nd</sup> October
5 <sup>h</sup> November	19 <sup>th</sup> November
3 <sup>rd</sup> December	17 <sup>th</sup> December
7 <sup>th</sup> January	21 <sup>st</sup> January
4 <sup>th</sup> February	18 <sup>th</sup> February
4 <sup>th</sup> March	18 <sup>th</sup> March

## How to apply?

### Strand 1 – New Provision/Capacity Building

There is a two-stage application process.

#### Step 1: Complete the Expression of Interest form

This form will give you the opportunity to share your initial ideas and plans. We will use the basis of this form to allocate a Development Worker who will discuss your ideas with you and can offer additional ideas, advice and guidance. Completed expression of interest forms should be sent to [cs-0-5communityoffer@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:cs-0-5communityoffer@norfolk.gov.uk)

The team will contact you with feedback on your proposal and can offer support to you if more information is needed prior to submitting a complete application.

From this, if appropriate, you will be encouraged to complete a full application form to be considered by the monthly panel.

#### Step 2: Full application

Once you have received feedback on your Expression of Interest, we will notify you that you can complete and the full application and return by the submission deadline provided to [cs-0-5communityoffer@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:cs-0-5communityoffer@norfolk.gov.uk)

If you have any questions about making an application, or need to receive these forms in other formats please call 0344 800 8020

### Strand 2 – Covid 19 Recovery Grant

Applicants can apply using the short form available at [www.norfolk.gov.uk/earlychildhoodfunding](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/earlychildhoodfunding). If support to complete the application is needed, then you should contact [cs-0-5communityoffer@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:cs-0-5communityoffer@norfolk.gov.uk)

## When can I apply?

Grants are allocated on a rolling basis via a grants panel which will regularly award grants. Grants will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

## What reporting will be required?

### For Strand 1

Successful applicants will be required to provide a brief update approximately 3 months after the grant payment is made, to review progress and discuss any possible changes and developments to funded activities. At the end of the funded period an end of grant report will be required which

will ask for evidence of relevant expenditure, including receipts for capital items (equipment etc.), and a brief report on activity.

Applicants will also be required to register the group onto the Norfolk Community Directory and update the group details as a minimum every 6 months. If any details of the group change or require updating, the applicant will be required to undertake this.

## **For Strand 2**

Successful applicants will be required to provide evidence of relevant expenditure, including receipts and a brief report on how the funding has allowed them to reopen their activity.

## **Submitting your application**

Once you are happy with your application it should be returned to [cs-0-5communityoffer@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:cs-0-5communityoffer@norfolk.gov.uk) by the deadline for the panel at which you wish for your application to be considered.

**Please note:** An ink signature is not required when the form is submitted from the main organisation email or the main contact's email. An electronic signature or typed name will suffice.

Applicants will be informed of panel decision within 10 working days of panel via email. The panel may decide to include conditions as part of the award. These will be detailed in the contract that will be issued once an award for funding has been agreed. This usually occurs when panel recognise that there is a need to award funding but may feel the applicant(s) would benefit from additional support from a Development Worker or there are some uncertainties contained within the application.

When accepting the award, applicants are also agreeing to a process of monitoring. For strand 1, a worker from Norfolk County Council will be assigned to support your group and ensure that you are using the funding for its agreed purpose and any other help you may require.

An applicant may retract their application or decline the offer of funding at any point prior to payment. Once the payment has been processed the terms and conditions of the contract will apply.

Please do not contact the team to request the outcome, as it will not be shared by any other means.

Applicants can resubmit their application, if they are able to address issues raised in feedback if their initial bid is declined and can demonstrate that their activity does meet the criteria of the fund.

## **Glossary**

**Organisation** is used to describe the body that is making the application for funding and is responsible for running the activity

**Activity/Group** is used to describe the event for which funding is requested, that takes place for families with children aged 0-5 years.