

CRITERIA

LUTON INNOVATION & COLLABORATION FUND

Pilot & Test: PHASE 2

A FUND MANAGED BY
BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION

ON BEHALF OF
Luton Borough Council



Luton





As part of Luton Borough Council's groundbreaking **Fairness Taskforce**, and thanks to funding received from the **National Lottery Community Fund**, BLCF are working with local partners to offer a new fund to deliver actions of Luton's Fairness Taskforce, shaping future work within the sector. The Luton Innovation & Collaboration Fund welcomes the opportunity for innovative projects in newly formed collaborations to address the actions identified by the Fairness Taskforce.

INTRODUCTION

The heart of Luton's 2040 strategy is the commitment to tackle inequity, ensuring everyone in Luton has the opportunity to thrive and no-one has to live in poverty.

To achieve this, we need to deliver more equitable outcomes for all Luton residents, whilst ensuring everyone in Luton has the power to shape the future of the town.

Launched in November 2021, the Luton Fairness Taskforce is intentionally co-designed as a cross-sector and community-centered network to identify and overcome structural barriers on a range of social, economic, and environmental challenges facing the town.

The Taskforce is radical in its scope, grounded in a strong and highly active civil society across the town, increasingly recognised as an opportunity for collaboration and co-production by system partners, and has full strategic backing from the council at highest levels.

The Taskforce is a trusted and viable vehicle to take more dynamic and distributed action in key areas of concern to local people; particularly those that are underrepresented.

Amongst other examples, the early work of the Taskforce has already mobilised community partnerships to deliver:

- Access to welcome spaces/hubs, tackling loneliness and providing energy advice for 10,000 residents together with a Food First Network.
- Employability days to link key local employers with young people from black African, black Caribbean and south Asian communities.
- A £250K collaboration and innovation fund to generate VCSFE led solutions for a new community network and hub programme for the town.
- Youth-led research into fairness and justice in the criminal justice system.

HOW MUCH CAN GROUPS APPLY FOR?

Pilot & Test Fund – up to £7,000, aimed at groups looking to develop and deliver pilot community activities in the area for up to a 6-month period.

Your organisation must deliver the pilot project within a **formed partnership*** with at least one other organisation. Priority will be given to applications from newly formed partnerships/collaborations with new innovative project ideas.

** formed partnership*; between two or more organisations, agreeing to carry out activities together for a common purpose.

Available Funding:

Pilot & Test Phase 2: Funding for 9 projects at £7000 each.

All successful projects of both Phase 1 and Phase Two of Pilot & Test rounds will be eligible to apply for a larger funding round delivering activities for up to a 12-month period. Consider the work post Pilot & Test phase for this.

Fund priorities

This funding programme will be intricately linked to the themes covered by the Fairness Taskforce events in 2025 (January – June), specifically the actions identified in consultation.

Actions have been identified as:

- **Young people mentors (male):** upskilling/training for peer support / Male role models (Men/Dads/Parenting) and male peer support. e.g. innovative activities other than sport are encouraged.
- **Care Leavers:** support services at 16+ regarding transition into independence. For example, life skills to live independently, including practical skills, and emotional wellbeing.
- **Men and Boys:** creating opportunities for career pathways and development, for example, profession focused training or knowledge of potential career opportunities.
- **Supporting independence and access with the inclusion and support of people with disabilities.** For example, in pursuits of travel, social activities, advocacy and advice. *The term “People with disabilities” is used in this case as this term is often considered more universally acceptable. It emphasises that disability is just one aspect of a person and that they are, first and foremost, people.*
- **Good Neighbour Schemes** - *local, volunteer-led groups that provide practical and social support to residents who need a helping hand, particularly older or vulnerable individuals. These schemes aim to promote community well-being by offering services like transport to appointments, help with shopping, and companionship.*

- **Training in the VCFSE sector (partners and stakeholders) regarding accessibility of information and resources.** For example, peer learning within the sector – do you have skills to share that can improve accessibility of information and resources within an organisation?
- **Green Spaces** – Inclusive activities for people with disabilities that utilise/explore local green spaces. For example, provisions that improve access to green spaces/nature for people with disabilities.

Your pilot project must address at least one of the actions stated above. Consideration of applications submitted for new innovative projects that are in keeping with the actions listed will be deliberated.

We Fund

All projects or initiatives must for the benefit of the local community in **Luton**. We welcome applications from the following:

Any applicants must be able to demonstrate that you have:

- A constitution or other governing document (please contact the local CVS office should you need any further support around this).
- A committee of at least 3 unrelated Trustees / Directors (no-one with 'significant control').
- A comprehensive safeguarding policy.
- A new formal partnership/collaboration established with at least one other organisation.
- Have identified who the lead partner will be, and has good financial management and health, without large free / unrestricted funds.
- A proposed project which has not already been funded by BLCF (or separately applied for BLCF funding).
- Considered how your proposal ensures that people of different backgrounds, ages and abilities are included (fair and equitable)- we may also ask for an equality, diversity & inclusion policy.
- A clear plan/ strategy for when funding ends.

If your organisation is a social enterprise (including CICs) there is specific guidance available on our website [here](#).

We Do Not Fund

- Individuals.
- National organisations (unless clear local benefits).
- Community Interest Companies (CICs) limited by shares.
- Profit-making organisations.
- Statutory bodies or work that forms part of a statutory responsibility.
- Organisations or activities that promote political parties or religion. (We do fund activities that demonstrate wider public benefit).
- Professional marketing / advertising and fundraising.
- Retrospective costs (for things that have already been paid for, or activities undertaken).
- General appeals or sponsorship.
- Animal welfare, unless the project directly benefits people.
- Trips (excluding respite care) and / or fundraising events.

Supporting Documents

We require a full budget breakdown and project plan for the project or activity. You must also upload the following supporting documents with your application:

- Latest set of annual accounts.
- Governing documents.
- Bank statement (no older than 3mths).
- Equal opportunity policy.
- Safeguarding policy.
- Trustees and directors' details (names, address and brief background info).
- Partnership agreement between all organisations involved.

Should you require any support with any of the above please contact us in the first instance on administrator@blcf.org.uk using the subject line 'Luton Innovation & Collaboration Fund' enquiry.

Monitoring & Evaluation

All organisations in receipt of funding will be asked to complete end-of-project monitoring report so that we can see the outcome of the work and impact in the local community.

We will ask how you spent the grant, including providing receipts. You will need to tell us about the project outcomes, impact, important issues, and lessons learned. We will also contact successful applicants to discuss progress and organise a visit part way through the delivery to help with learning and development.

Before beginning the project, please consider:

- Who will write your end of grant report.
- How will you measure progress.
- What information you will collect:
 - Numbers (quantitative data) – how many people use the service, goals achieved (e.g. employment, improved health).
 - Stories / Case Studies (qualitative data) – user / volunteer feedback, observed increase in skills, confidence, etc.
 - Learning – user / volunteer feedback, what went well, what would you do differently, etc.
 - Partner feedback.
- Survey/Short interview for feedback to evaluator partners.

Additional Information

The deadline for applications is 29th September 2025 at midday.

All applications are thoroughly assessed, including due diligence checks (more information [here](#)). Only applications which have been shortlisted and clearly meet the fund's criteria will be presented to our panel of local volunteers. We reserve the right to decline or accept any application according to the grants panel's decision.

The decision panel is due to take place in mid-November 2025, with the aim to relay decisions to applicants within 10 days of the panel date.

We encourage all applicants to explore other funding sources. Your local Community Voluntary Service (CVS) can provide funding advice. For Bedfordshire CVS, visit www.cvsbeds.org.uk

Equal Opportunities

We commit to promoting equal opportunities and valuing diversity regardless of any protected characteristics.

If you have any queries, please contact us at grants@blcf.org.uk