

# CRITERIA

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## LUTON RISING NEW HORIZONS FUND

A FUND MANAGED BY  
BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION

ON BEHALF OF  
LONDON LUTON AIRPORT LTD  
TRADING AS LUTON RISING



## Introduction

The Luton Rising New Horizons Fund is administered by the Bedfordshire & Luton Community Foundation (BLCF), on behalf of Luton Rising.

The recent publication of the 2025 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) measure has demonstrated that relative deprivation has increased in Luton, now ranking as the 45th most deprived area out of 296 local authorities, compared to a ranking of 70th in 2019.

Luton Rising's community funding is focused on delivering social impact in line with the Luton 2040 vision, to make Luton a healthy, fair and sustainable town where everyone can thrive and no one has to live in poverty by the year 2040. Therefore, to improve the town metrics, Luton Rising will be investing £400,000 into this new funding pot to provide grants which exist to support the delivery of targeted preventative interventions that alleviate poverty and prevent destitution. This fund will therefore prioritise projects in Luton wards containing areas within the top 10% most deprived in the UK (see Appendix A).

Luton Rising and BLCF aim to work in partnership with grantees in delivering transformation. Therefore, a crucial element of the funding criteria is for grantees to monitor and report tangible changes across the 2 years of funding.

## How Much Can Groups Apply For?

**Grants of up to £50,000 per year for 2 years** (max £100,000 total per grantee) to support Luton residents.

Funding must be to support a particular piece of work and form part of the organisation's core service delivery.

Funding must be spent between May 2026 – May 2028.

Funded activity must fit with the priorities of the fund. **Up to 15%** of the grant can be used **for core costs**, such as rent and utilities. The rest should be used for project or activity delivery costs. If you have any queries, please contact us at [grants@blcf.org.uk](mailto:grants@blcf.org.uk)

If your programme has previously been funded by Luton Rising, you will need to provide clear evidence in your application demonstrating the impact achieved to date and plans to extend this impact.

## Priorities

Specifically, this fund aims to target the 20,000 residents in Luton Living in destitution.

**Applicants must clearly address one of the following priorities:**

- 1) Preventing and reducing destitution through early intervention activity in identified priority neighbourhoods, addressing the root causes of poverty. (See Appendix B for definition of 'destitution').
- 2) Strengthening financial resilience and independence among people living in or at risk of destitution through access to advice, skills, employment pathways and cost of living support.

- 3) Reducing inequality and improving life chances by empowering priority neighbourhoods to develop sustainable solutions to poverty. This may include fostering collaboration between residents, community groups and service providers, sharing resources and creating spaces that strengthen resilience and reduce isolation.

Applicants must also be able to demonstrate that they:

- Have the capacity, knowledge, skills, and resources to deliver their activities effectively and to a high measurable quality.
- Have proper financial management, are in good financial health, and not holding an amount of unrestricted funds that are disproportionately high in relation to annual expenditure.
- Can collect, manage, and report data to the funder as agreed, to show the impact of the work (monthly data collection, regular monitoring reports and provision of case studies).
- Are committed to the promotion of equality, diversity, and inclusion both within client groups and across the community. This should be clearly demonstrated through the way you plan and deliver your work and activities, and your engagement with [Luton's Fairness Taskforce](#).

Priority will be given to organisations that:

- Deliver preventive work and can demonstrate that the proposed work will address this.
- Work in partnership or collaboratively, through clear, measurable and accountable partnership agreements. This should be with partners from complementary fields or with expertise and opportunities which will further the long-term impact of their work.
- Participate actively in peer-to-peer learning and evaluation work, attend workshops to support these and are developing a theory of change approach to their work.

## **We Fund**

You need to be able to demonstrate that you have:

- A Charity Commission registration number or equivalent registration with the appropriate body (i.e. Companies House).
- A constitution or other governing document.
- A committee of at least 3 unrelated Trustees / Directors (no-one with 'significant control').
- Good financial management and health, without large free / unrestricted funds.
- A comprehensive safeguarding policy (for work with children / adults at risk).
- A comprehensive equity, diversity & inclusion / equal opportunities policy.
- A clear plan to work in partnership with others.
- Sought funds from a range of sources, made efforts to become self-sustaining, and have a clear strategy for when funding ends.

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

## We Do Not Fund

- Organisations applying for the Luton Rising Youth Fund.
- Groups with 3 or more active BLCF grants (each of which are above £5,000).
- Groups who have provided low quality monitoring on previous grants.
- Individuals.
- National organisations (unless clear local benefits).
- Private Limited Companies (except Community Interest Companies - CICs - limited by guarantee).
- Profit-making organisations.
- Schools or academy trusts.
- 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 (unless you can demonstrate that this is only to publicise the funded work to engage beneficiaries).
- Professional fundraising.
- Retrospective costs.
- General appeals or sponsorship.
- Animal welfare, unless the project directly benefits people.
- Trips (excluding respite care) and / or fundraising events.

## Key Dates / Process

- 22/01/2026 Fund launch, open for Expressions of Interest (EOI).  
**Please note:** Not all organisations that submit an EOI will be invited to full application. Shortlisting will be based on how well the proposed project aligns with the fund priorities.
- 05/02/2026 Expression of Interest deadline.
- 20/02/2026 Shortlisted applicants invited to submit full application.
- 09/03/2026 Deadline for full applications (12pm midday).
- Late April Decision-making panel meets & applicants notified of outcomes.
- Mid-May Funds paid to successful applicants.

## Supporting Documents

We require a full budget breakdown (split by year) and project plan for the project or activity. We will also need to see full evidence of your organisation's eligibility as outlined above, including (but not limited to) the following supporting documents:

- Annual accounts - most recent signed annual accounts / management accounts, which have been audited / independently examined where legally required.
- Governing documents - constitution, articles of association, or set of rules.
- Bank statement - date within 1 month, in the name and correct address of the organisation applying, with at least 2 unrelated signatories.
- Equal opportunity policy.

- Safeguarding policy.
- Trustees and directors (names, roles, confirmation of any related trustees / directors and any other potential conflicts of interest).

## Monitoring & Evaluation

We value working together to demonstrate the impact of this programme. To ensure transparency and shared success, we ask partners to provide regular reports showing clear outcomes and data from both immediate interventions and preventative measures.

Quarterly reporting is a key requirement and helps us collectively align with the fund's objectives. Successful organisations will be required to complete:

- Monthly data reporting on direct beneficiaries supported during the grant period (via an online form).
- Quarterly interim updates (short report).
- Accommodate visits by BLCF staff and Luton Rising representatives where appropriate.
- Annual end of year report for year 1 and plan of activity for year 2.
- End of grant (EOG) monitoring report to cover the whole grant period (2 years) with clear outcomes data.

The year-end and end of grant reports will include information including (but not limited to):

- How the grant was spent.
- Outcomes and KPIs achieved.
- The difference the project has made.
- What was achieved.
- Any issues experienced.
- Key learning.
- Collection of case studies to demonstrate beneficiary impact.

Successful organisations will also be required to attend and contribute to an annual peer-to-peer learning event and evaluation workshop at the end of the 2-year programme.

Before beginning the project, please consider:

- Who will write your reports.
- Your aims and objectives.
- 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.

## Additional Information

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

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](http://www.cvsbeds.org.uk)

## Equal Opportunities

We commit to promoting equal opportunities and valuing diversity including all protected characteristics. We expect applicants to also be committed to the promotion of equality, cohesion, and inclusion.

If you have any queries, please contact us at [grants@blcf.org.uk](mailto:grants@blcf.org.uk)

APPENDIX A

Deprivation in Luton

This fund prioritises areas of greatest need based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) as shown in the map below. Luton’s 20 wards are grouped into 3 categories:

Highest Priority Wards

These wards contain multiple areas in the top 10% most deprived areas in the UK. Applications for work supporting residents of these wards are the highest priority for this fund:

Beech Hill, Biscot, Central, and Farley.

Second Priority Wards

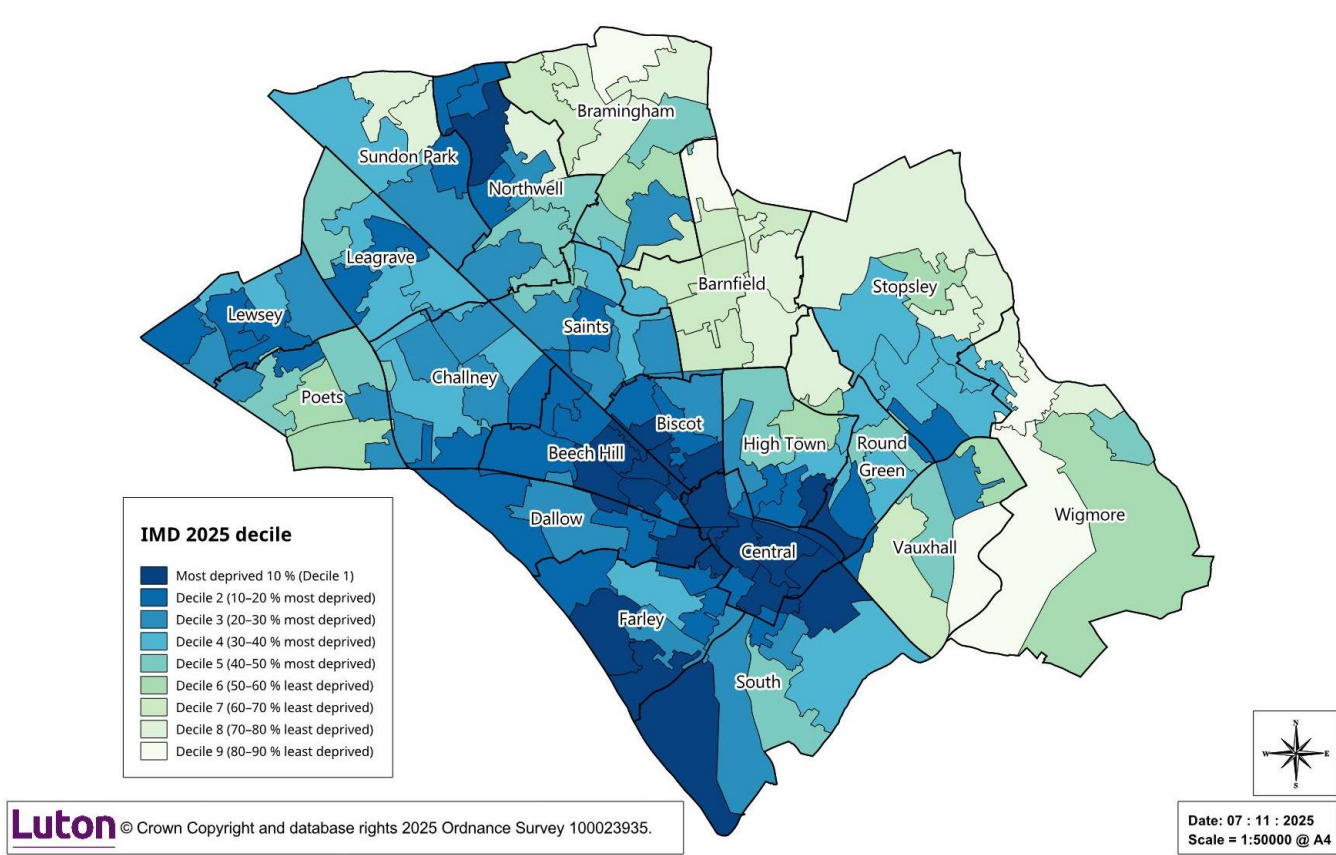
These wards each contain at least one area in the top 10% most deprived areas in the UK. Applications for work supporting residents of these wards will be prioritised above others:

Dallow, Northwell, Round Green, and South.

Other Wards

Applications for work supporting residents of these wards will be considered, but priority will be given to the wards listed above:

Barnfield, Bramingham, Challney, High Town, Leagrave, Lewsey, Poets, Saints, Stopsley, Sundon Park, Vauxhall, and Wigmore.



## APPENDIX B

### ‘Destitution’ Definition

For the purposes of this fund, we are using [Joseph Rowntree Foundation’s definition of ‘destitution’](#) as follows.

People are destitute if:

- a) They, or their children, have lacked two or more of these six essentials over the past month, because they cannot afford them:
  - shelter (have slept rough for 1 or more nights).
  - food (have had fewer than two meals a day for 2 or more days).
  - heating their home (have been unable to do this for 5 or more days).
  - lighting their home (have been unable to do this for 5 or more days).
  - clothing and footwear (appropriate for weather).
  - basic toiletries (soap, shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrush).

**OR**

- b) Their income is so extremely low that they are unable to purchase these essentials for themselves.