

COMMUNITIES MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING FUND – ANGUS

Closing date – 12 noon 5th January 2025

Local Guidance for Year 5 & 6 (2025-27)

*The funding will be allocated through Angus Third Sector
Interface (TSI): Voluntary Action Angus (VAA).*

**Please read the following document before completing
your application**

Funded through:



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

About the Fund

The Communities Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund (the Fund) was launched in October 2021 by the Scottish Government to strengthen community support for mental health across Scotland. It invests in grassroots, community-led projects that make a positive difference to people's wellbeing.

Since it began, the Fund has distributed more than £66 million nationally, supporting thousands of projects. In Angus, Voluntary Action Angus (VAA) has managed the Fund locally, working with partners to ensure money goes directly into our communities.

In years 5 and 6, the Fund will distribute £15 million per year across Scotland, with a focus on prevention, early intervention, and reducing inequalities.

National Priorities

The Fund has three national priority themes:

1. **Social isolation and loneliness**
2. **Suicide prevention**
3. **Tackling poverty and inequality**

In Years 5 and 6, there is also an emphasis on:

- Responding to the cost-of-living crisis
- Supporting the six priority family groups from the *Best Start, Bright Futures* Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan

The Fund directly contributes to Scotland's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2023) and supports the ambition of healthier, fairer, and more connected communities.

Contents

Page

1. Background: Communities MHWB Fund	4
2. What is the MHWB Fund	5
3. What's new in years 5 and 6	6
4. Fund outcomes, aims and priorities (defined by the Scottish Government)	6
5. Local Strategy & Priorities	8
6. Funding Application Process	10
7. Assessment Process	10
8. Eligibility	11
9. Monitoring and Evaluation requirements	17
10. Definitions	17
11. How to submit an application	19

1. Background: Communities MHWB Fund

In February 2021, an additional £120 million was announced for a Recovery and Renewal Fund to ensure delivery of the commitments set out in the Mental Health Transition and Recovery Plan. This funding comes in response to the mental health need arising from the pandemic, and is also intended to benefit the full agenda for mental health and wellbeing in line with the four areas of key need set out in the Plan.

As part of the Recovery and Renewal Fund, the Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care announced a new Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund (the Fund) for adults on 15 October 2021, with £15 million being made available in 2021- 22. This was the first year of a two year fund to support mental health and well-being in communities across Scotland. The Fund is distributed by Third Sector Interfaces (TSI's) to community groups and organisations. This funding reflects the importance we place on community support as part of our overall mental health infrastructure and the commitments given by Scottish Ministers to increase direct mental health investment, in both the NHS Recovery Plan and this year's Programme for Government.

Building on the focus on wellbeing and prevention in the Transition and Recovery Plan, the Fund provides significant investment into community support for adults. This investment complements the children and young people's community wellbeing support currently being rolled out across Scotland. It also has strong links to the Scottish Government's commitment to ensure that every GP Practice will have access to a primary care mental health and wellbeing service by 2026, providing funding for 1,000 additional dedicated staff who can help grow community mental health resilience and direct social prescribing.

This guidance outlines in more detail what the Fund is about, how it will be delivered, who can apply and how to do this.

2. What is the Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund?

The intended outcome of the Fund is to develop a culture of mental wellbeing and prevention within local communities and across Scotland with improved awareness of how we can all stay well and help ourselves and others.

The Fund seeks to contribute to the four key areas of focus from the Mental Health Transition and Recovery Plan:

- Promoting and supporting the conditions for good mental health and wellbeing at population level
- Providing accessible signposting to help, advice and support
- Providing a rapid and easily accessible response to those in distress. Ensuring safe, effective treatment and care of people living with mental illness

The Fund also seeks to contribute to the following national outcomes from the National Performance Framework:

- We are healthy and active
- We will live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe
- We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth, and power more equally

Funding available

The maximum amount an organisation can receive across Years 5 and 6 depends on how you apply:

- **Collaborative applications:**
Partnership bids can apply for up to £100,000 per year. If funded for both Year 5 and Year 6, this would total £200,000 over two years (shared across the partnership).
- **Single-organisation applications:**
Individual organisations can apply for up to £50,000 per year. If funded for both Year 5 and Year 6, this would total £100,000 over two years.

- **Mixed collaborative and individual applications:**

Where organisations apply together for a collaborative bid of £75,000 (for example, £37,500 per organisation), each organisation may also apply individually for up to £12,500, provided the overall £50,000 per-organisation cap per year is not exceeded

Applicants should ensure budgets are clear, proportionate and within the relevant caps.

Length of funding:

All funding should be spent within a year of the grant being awarded.

3. What's New in Years 5 and 6

Years 5 & 6 are part of the Fairer Funding Pilot, meaning:

- For the **first time**, organisations can apply for **two-year grants** (in year 5)
- **60–80% of funds** in Year 5 should be allocated to **2-year projects** to support stability and planning
- **Local Partnership Panel** agreed to dedicate 80% of the funding to 2-year projects.
- **Specific amount** of the fund has been **ringfenced** for **grassroot** organisations
- Year 6 focuses on **one-year grants** as all two-year funding will have already been committed
- VAA will run a separate application process each year, so **new groups always have a chance to apply**
- All funding must be distributed by **March 2-26 (Year 5)** and **March 2027 (Year 6)**

4. Fund outcomes, aims and priorities (defined by the Scottish Government)

The overarching aim of the Fund is to support community-based initiatives that promote and develop good mental health and wellbeing and/or mitigate and protect against the

impact of distress and mental ill health within the adult population (aged 16 or over), with a particular focus on prevention and early intervention.

Specifically, the Fund aims to:

1. Tackle mental health inequalities through supporting a range of 'at risk' groups
2. Address priority issues of social isolation and loneliness, suicide prevention and poverty and inequality with a particular emphasis on responding to the cost-of-living crisis and support to those facing socio-economic disadvantage
3. Support small 'grass roots' community groups and organisations to deliver activities.
4. Provide opportunities for people to connect with each other, build trusted relationships, and revitalise communities

The Fund directly contributes to Outcome 4 of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy published in June 2023, to: "Better equip communities to support people's mental health and wellbeing and provide opportunities to connect with others".

It also clearly supports the following three key areas of focus cited within the Strategy:

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing for the whole population, improving understanding and tackling stigma, inequality, and discrimination
- Prevent mental health issues occurring or escalating and tackle underlying causes, adversities, and inequalities wherever possible
- Provide mental health and wellbeing support and care, ensuring people and communities can access the right information, skills, services, and opportunities in the right place at the right time, using a person-centred approach

The Fund also seeks to contribute to the following national outcomes from the National Performance Framework:

- We are healthy and active
- We will live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe
- We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth, and power more equally

The intended outcomes of the Fund are to:

- Develop a culture of mental wellbeing and prevention within local communities and across Scotland with improved awareness of how we can all stay well and help ourselves and others
- Foster a strategic and preventative approach to improving community mental health
- Support the resilience of communities and investing in their capacity to develop their own solutions, including through strong local partnerships
- Tackle the social determinants of mental health by targeting resources and collaborating with other initiatives to tackle poverty and inequality

5. Local Strategy & Priorities

Local Priorities in Angus

Applications are especially welcomed for projects that connect with **local strategies** including the *Angus Health & Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan (2023–26)*. Key local priorities are:

- **Prevention and proactive care**
- **Care closer to home**
- **Mental health, learning disability, and substance use recovery**

We particularly encourage applications that support:

- **Neurodiversity** – practical advice, peer support, independent living skills, and support for families
- **Suicide prevention** – community and peer support, resources, and bereavement support
- **Cost-of-living support** – initiatives that help people cope with financial pressures while boosting wellbeing

Angus Adult Integrated Mental Health Services have identified the following areas as priorities where they would welcome applications for:

1. Neurodiversity (ND)

Support for the person, their families, and carers. Consider:

- Low level advice/support/signposting for wellbeing, finances, how to access services, housing support etc for people
- 1:1 Support/Group Support/Resources
- Information/supportive space for people thinking they might be ND
- More regular opportunities for peer support and social contact in ND-friendly environment.
- Supporting ND parents struggling to meet the needs of their children, navigate education/health systems etc
- Independent living skills - short-term support to build various daily living skills

If your application aligns with specifics regarding AHSCP ND pathway and you would like to know more about the ND Pathway and talk through any ideas, please contact: **Erin Gerrard, Neurodevelopmental Nurse Co-ordinator** erin.gerrard@nhs.scot (Specifically, regarding ND pathway, for general application advice please contact VAA on mhwbapplications@voluntaryactionangus.org.uk)

2. Suicide Prevention

- Those who are experiencing thoughts of suicide.
- Those who are supporting those with thoughts of suicide.
- People bereaved by suicide

Consider:

- Community Support
- Peer Support -1:1/Group
- Time to Think Benches
- Resources

If your application aligns with specifics regarding AHSCP three-year Angus Suicide Prevention Action Plan and you would like to know more about the Action Plan and talk through any ideas, please contact: **Linette Cromar, Development Officer, Suicide Prevention** cromarl@angus.gov.uk (Specifically, regarding Angus Suicide Prevention Action Plan, for general application advice please contact VAA on mhwbapplications@voluntaryactionangus.org.uk)

6. Funding Application Process

- You must complete an **Application Form, Project Plan, and Budget Sheet**.
- The size of your Project Plan depends on the funding requested:
 - Up to £5,000 → 500 words
 - £5,000 - £10,000 → 750 words
 - £10,000 - £50,000 → 1,500+ words
- Supporting documents (constitution, accounts, policies, etc.) must be submitted.
- Applications will be assessed by a **local partnership panel**, including VAA, Angus Health & Social Care Partnership, and other community representatives.
- The panel will look at both the quality of individual applications and the overall spread of projects across Angus.

Applicants should note the assessment panel will require greater detail on plans where a higher amount of funding has been applied for.

7. Assessment Process

When assessing and agreeing individual bids, it will be the responsibility of the local partnership group led by Voluntary Action Angus as the TSI to look at individual applications as well as strategically at the coherence of proposals across their area, in line with their local partnership plan. Part of this oversight should include an assessment of the impact on specific groups and provision of this information through monitoring processes.

8. Eligibility

The ambition of this Fund is to support initiatives which promote mental health and wellbeing at a small scale, grass roots, community level. It should be accessible to all groups, no matter how small or inexperienced they are. It can support both new and existing groups and projects. These do not have to have mental health and wellbeing as their main focus, but their application does have to clearly benefit the mental wellbeing of people in their community.

Applications can be accepted from a range of voluntary, 'not for profit' organisations, associations, groups and clubs or consortiums/partnerships which have a strong community focus for their activities. The range of organisations that can apply are:

- Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisations (SCIO)
- Unincorporated Associations
- Companies Limited by Guarantee
- Trusts
- Not-for-profit company or asset locked company or Community Interest Companies (CIC)
- Cooperative and Community Benefit Societies
- Community councils
- Parent councils (where activities benefit adults and young people aged 16+)

Local partnerships can also consider funding constituted groups, either by supporting them to become constituted, or by providing small value grants (for example up to £2,000) for wellbeing support and capacity building purposes. Local partnerships can also consider allowing a constituted entity (that meets criteria above) to hold a grant for the constituted group. The TSI as grant giver would require to be satisfied with arrangements in terms of assurance around monitoring and accountability of spend.

Please note: VAA, as the TSI managing the Fund is not eligible to apply.

The focus of the Fund is on the adult population and on projects which help whole communities and/or community groups, in turn making a difference to the lives of individuals. The adult population is considered to be those aged 16 and over. We recognise that there is some overlap with Children and Young People community support funding although that funding is focused on targeted CYP projects.

What will the Fund support?

What can and cannot be funded?

The Fund aims to tackle mental health inequalities by supporting groups who are most at risk. Locally we welcome projects that support:

- Women (including those experiencing gender-based violence)
- People with long-term conditions or disabilities
- Minority ethnic communities
- Refugees and people with no recourse to public funds
- People experiencing socio-economic disadvantage
- People with severe and multiple disadvantage
- People living with diagnosed mental illness or trauma
- People bereaved by suicide
- People in rural or remote areas
- Older people (50+)
- LGBTQI+ communities
- Neurodiverse people and those with learning disabilities
- Young people aged 16–24

The Fund will support applications for the maintenance or expansion of existing activity; however, emphasis is placed on innovative new activity that provides additionality. The focus of the Fund is to support the adult population (defined as members of the population aged 16 years and over). Children can be a secondary beneficiary of the fund; however, the primary beneficiary must be adults from an 'at risk' group. The Children and Young People Community Support Fund, managed by local authorities, focuses on funding projects and activities aimed at supporting children and young people.

Funding of counselling and other therapeutic treatments

The Fund is not intended to support “treatment” focused projects and is not meant to replace funding for direct therapeutic interventions in the community, such as counselling or CBT. The Fund aims to provide a range of broader community supports that can complement clinical care. It provides an opportunity to test change ideas and approaches that aim to provide emotional and practical support to individuals at an early intervention and/or preventative level. This will hopefully reduce the escalation of and need for clinical interventions and care. There are other funding streams which can support counselling services in various realms (for example, the Scottish Government Survivors of Childhood Abuse Support Fund and Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Fund). For any proposals that do involve potential for clinically trained staff delivering therapeutic interventions, there should be clear arrangements in place for clinical supervision and governance. Specifically with regards to counselling support, it should conform to agreed professional standards, such as those provided by COSCA and BACP.

What Kind of Projects Can Be Funded?

Projects must be aimed at **adults aged 16+** and should demonstrate how they will improve mental health and wellbeing.

Examples include:

- Befriending or peer support groups
- Community cafés, lunch clubs, or social spaces
- Arts, culture, and creative wellbeing activities
- Walking groups, gardening, and outdoor projects
- Volunteer-led support services
- Financial wellbeing and cost-of-living support
- Awareness raising, training, and education sessions

What Can and Cannot Be Funded

☒ Can fund:

- Staff costs (fixed term/sessional)
- Volunteer expenses
- Equipment and hall hire
- Training
- Transport and small running costs
- One-off wellbeing events
- Small capital spends (up to £5,000) if directly linked to wellbeing outcomes **X**

Cannot fund:

- Ongoing statutory services
- Profit-making or fundraising activities
- Political or religious campaigning (faith-based groups can apply if activities are open to all)
- Alcohol
- Overseas travel
- Large capital projects

If you are not sure whether your project meets the fund criteria, please email mhwbapplications@voluntaryactionangus.org.uk VAA will then arrange an online call to discuss the eligibility of your project/activity.

The Year 1,2, 3 and 4 reports provide an account of the diverse range of projects that were funded in previous years, and we would expect similar breadth in Years 5 and 6.

We will fund	We cannot fund
Equipment	
One-off events	Electricity generation and feed-in tariff payment
Hall hire for community spaces	
Small capital spend up to £5,000	Political or religious campaigning
<i>Local partnerships can allow applicants to request funding for capital expenditure such as the construction, refurbishment and/or purchase of buildings, amenities or vehicles. The benefits of the capital expenditure must demonstrably contribute to the Fund outcomes. Applicants must be awarded no more than £5,000 for such capital expenditure. This limitation does not apply to the purchase of small items of equipment.</i>	Profit-making/fundraising activities
	VAT you can reclaim
	Statutory activities
	Overseas travel
	Alcohol
Staff costs (given longer term future of Fund is subject to evaluation and funding, these should be one off or fixed term)	
Training costs	
Transport	
Utilities/running costs	
Volunteer expenses	
Helping people to stay safe (PPE for small gatherings/group activity)	

Meaningful monitoring/Avoiding box ticking or tokenism

To improve the clarity and quality of data gathered for Years 5 and 6 of the Fund, it's essential to ensure applicants understand and provide meaningful reporting regarding how

their projects reach target groups. Based on the feedback from stakeholders and TSIs, the following steps can be incorporated into the local application process:

1. Define Meaningful Reach

Clearly articulate what is meant by a “meaningful” focus on target groups. Ticking boxes without intentionality will not be sufficient. Emphasise two potential criteria for meaningful reach:

- **Targeted Focus:** The project is designed specifically for a target group, where the group's needs and priorities are central to the project.
- **Broad Focus with Inclusive Adjustments:** The project serves a general audience, but deliberate adjustments have been made to ensure accessibility and inclusivity for specific groups. For example, language support, cultural sensitivity, or disability accommodations have been thoughtfully integrated.

2. Examples of Consideration for Specific Groups

Provide examples of what it looks like to address the needs of specific groups meaningfully. For instance:

- **LGBTQI+ Community:** Does the project offer a safe, inclusive space for LGBTQI+ individuals? Are staff trained in sensitivity around LGBTQI+ issues?
- **Refugee Community:** Are there language support services? Has the project considered cultural differences and potential stigmas faced by refugees?
- **People with Disabilities:** Is there appropriate physical access? Have materials and communication methods been adapted for those with visual, auditory, or cognitive impairments?

3. Guidance for Applicants

Ticking every target group without justification is not acceptable. Applicants should be able to explain:

- Why they are focusing on a particular group (if applicable).
- How their project addresses the specific needs of this group.

- What changes or adaptations they have made to ensure the group can fully participate in the project.

4. Monitoring and Reporting

To ensure better data quality, the application form should give specific examples of how the project has been adapted for target groups. This helps verify whether the claimed focus on these groups is substantive.

This approach helps to ensure that claims of focus on target groups are authentic and that the project outcomes genuinely reflect a commitment to inclusion.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation requirements

As the grant holders, TSIs will also have overall accountability for spend at a local level and will lead on reporting to national monitoring processes as well as to local evaluation. These are expected to be light touch with TSIs requesting the following information from each successful applicant:

If your project is successful, you will need to:

- Provide an **interim update** (for 2-year projects) and an **end-of-year report**
- Share information about activities, numbers reached, and outcomes achieved
- Show how your work has supported mental wellbeing and tackled inequalities
- Register your project on **VAA Angus Community Connector** and **ALISS** so people can find support
- Share case studies and learning so we can celebrate impact in Angus

10. Definitions

Capacity building

Capacity building is about activities, resources and support that strengthen the skills, abilities and confidence of people and community groups to take effective action and leading roles in the development of communities.

In simpler terms, capacity building can be described as developing the capacity and skills of the members of a community in such a way that they are better able to identify and help meet their needs and to participate more fully in society.

Co-production

“Delivering services in an equal reciprocal relationship between professionals, people using their services, their families and their neighbours. Where activities are produced in this way, both services and neighbourhoods become far more effective agents of change.” (NESTA & NEF, 2009)

Aim

What you hope to achieve e.g. to make older people feel more confident

Objective

A programme of activity that you need to carry out to achieve your aim. e.g. deliver a programme of confidence building courses

Outcomes

The changes, benefits and effects that happen as a result of your work e.g. people are able to look after and improve their own health and wellbeing and live in good health for longer. People feel more confident

Outputs

The services and products of your work which are usually quantifiable. e.g. 10 people feel their confidence has improved, 120 volunteer hours achieved, 12 training courses run

Key Dates

Year 5 applications open: 19th September 2025

Deadline for applications: 5th January 2026

Funding distributed: By 31st March 2026

Year 6 applications open: 18th September 2026

Deadline for applications: 5th January 2027

Funding distributed: By 31st March 2027

11. How to submit an application

Access the application form [HERE](#)

Access the budget form [HERE](#)

The deadline for applications is 12 noon on 5th January 2026.

If your supporting documentation is not available electronically, please send hard copies to the address below clearly stating what they refer to:

Hayley Mearns, Voluntary Action Angus, 5-7 The Cross, Forfar, ANGUS, DD8 1BX

For information or support with your application email:

MHWBapplications@voluntaryactionangus.org.uk or call: 01307 466113

We are here to help community groups of all sizes apply – whether you are brand new or have been running projects for years.