

ESF Community Grants in Devon and Somerset Funding Application Guide 2019-2021



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Introduction to ESF Community Grants

ESF Community Grants, funded by the European Social Fund, is a programme that aims to support small and voluntary organisations with grants of £1,000 - £20,000 for local initiatives that will move unemployed and inactive people towards employment, training or education.

The programme opens in April 2019, and is scheduled to close to applications in September 2020, with all activity being finished and reported by July 2021.

ESF Community Grants are funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Education and Skills Funding Agency, and are being managed by Petroc in Devon and Somerset.

Grants will support a range of activities aimed at moving individuals towards the labour market by improving their access to local employment and skills provision. They will provide support to underrepresented communities and individuals, especially those from deprived communities, to access employment, including self-employment, or further learning and training.

Successful projects will be required to collect and record specific information on the people they are working with, and the costs they are incurring.

About the Fund

ESF Community Grants has £547,826 for Devon and £225,000 for Somerset of funding from the European Social Fund as part of the 2014-2020 European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme in England. The Department for Work and Pensions is the Managing Authority for the England European Social Fund programme. Established by the European Union, the European Social Fund helps local areas stimulate their economic development by investing in projects which will support skills development, employment and job creation, social inclusion and local community regenerations. For more information visit <https://www.gov.uk/european-growth-funding>

Who can apply for an ESF Community Grant?

Applications can be made by Third Sector organisations or by small organisations with fewer than 49 staff and an annual turnover or balance sheet of less than €10m Euros (currently approximately £8.6m).

You must be able to deliver your proposed project within Devon or Somerset.

Organisations interested in applying for a grant should already have links with eligible individuals, including those from the identified priority groups (see list below), who have barriers to accessing mainstream provision.

Please note you can only have one live project at any time. Your project must be completed and reported to Petroc before another project can be started.

What activities can be funded?

Community Grants can fund a wide range of activities for adults 16 years and older across Devon and Somerset. All participants must be unemployed or inactive.

Below are a few examples of the types of projects that can be funded.

- Jobs club
- Wellbeing workshops
- Community Gardens
- Personal Development Awareness
- Skills Development

Prior to submitting your application please ensure you have researched what is already being delivered locally to avoid duplication.

Local delivery may be funded by the following:

- Department for Work and Pensions
- The National Lottery Community Fund
- Education and Skills Funding Agency
- Local Authorities
- National Careers Service

Priority Groups

We particularly want to fund projects that will include support for people who are unemployed or inactive and:

- Are over 50 years of age
- Have disabilities
- Are from ethnic minorities
- Are female

Please be aware that during the assessment process priority will be given to those projects that include some participants from priority groups.

What costs can the grant cover?

As an ESF funded project, Community Grants are subject to a defined set of regulations which must be adhered to. It is important for organisations who are applying for funding to understand that a grant cannot fund ineligible activities, and that grant recipients will need to provide:

- Evidence of the eligibility of participants (including employment status and eligibility for ESF funds)
- Evidence of the activities undertaken using the grant
- Monitoring information, including information about individual participants and the activities they are involved in
- Evidence of expenditure both during and on completion of the project activities.

Below is a list of items that can and can't be funded.

Eligible costs	<u>NOT</u> eligible costs
• Staff costs (where not already funded through other sources). • Running costs of the project, e.g., stationery, room hire, marketing etc. You will need to show how you have calculated these costs. • Skills training and other course costs. • Administration costs directly associated with the project. Please ensure you allocate appropriate resource to complete the claim and monitoring reports for your project. • Minor equipment under £1000 i.e., small capital items in line with ESF guidance (a computer, monitor, keyboard, printer and software counts as one item). • Costs directly associated with the participants' involvement in the project, e.g., travel costs, childcare, subsistence while taking part in project activities. • Staff expenses for direct activity on the project.	• Core costs of running your organisation other than those directly associated with delivery of the project. • Any costs not directly associated with the running of your project. • Any costs that have been incurred before the start date on your contract if your application is successful. • Any costs that cannot be fully evidenced back to your organisation's nominated bank account or that do not meet the evidence requirements, e.g., invoices not made out to your organisation or cash payments not previously agreed. • Any bank charges or legal fees. • Activities promoting religious beliefs or political activities. • Activities that the state has a legal obligation to provide, e.g., education. • Fundraising activities for your organisation or any other group or activity. • Contingency costs.

Not run an ESF project before?

Petroc has experience of managing ESF projects and will be able to support organisations to provide the required information and to ensure that only eligible activities are funded.

Points to consider before applying:

- Do you have staff who are able to work with participants to collect detailed and accurate information on their personal circumstances?
- Do you have staff who are able to accurately report project activity?
- Do you have the capability in your organisation to accurately monitor and keep evidence of spend?

We will provide clear guidance and templates for successful organisations to enable them to provide the necessary project monitoring data and evidence. In addition, applicants and grant recipients will be able to access support from Petroc staff with specialisms in ESF to help them to successfully engage in the programme.

Making an Application

Your Organisation – Requirements and Standards

As part of the application process, we will ask you to tell us about your how your organisation is structured, how you manage finances, and how you ensure that you meet legal and ESF requirements.

The following table sets out the key areas you will need to provide assurances about, or evidence for, and when you will need to provide the evidence. Petroc will provide guidance where required.

Evidence to be provided	When you'll need to provide the evidence:			
	Stage 1	Stage 2	At Grant Award	at Audit
Legal Structure Declaration Organisation details to be provided for checking.	✓	X	X	✓
Accounts & Financial Management We will require the previous 3 years of Financial Accounts, or if your organisation is new and does not have 3 full years, then we will need a copy of your current management accounts. You will need a bank account in your organisation's name in order for payments to be made to you.	X	X	✓	X
Equal Opportunities Adoption and implementation of the Petroc Community Grants equal opportunities statement.	X	X	✓	✓
Employment Organisations must comply with all employment law and demonstrate good practice in personnel matters by having clear policies and procedures.	X	X	✓	✓
Insurance Organisations must ensure that appropriate insurance certification and licences are in place. For example, public liability, professional indemnity (where appropriate) and employer's liability.	X	X	✓	✓

Data Protection Policy & Procedures All organisations are expected to comply with the Data Protection Act 2018.	X	X	✓	✓
Health & Safety Policy & Procedures Organisations must meet legal requirements under current Health and Safety regulations.	X	X	✓	✓
Safeguarding Policy & Procedures Organisations which provide services that involve access to, or having contact with, children up to the age of 18 years or vulnerable adults are required to meet the statutory requirements under the Protection of Children Act 1989 and any other relevant legislation.	X	X	✓	✓

How to apply

Petroc have created an easy to read flowchart in Appendix 3 which shows the process for applying for a community grant. All applications should be emailed to communitygrants@petroc.ac.uk

All application forms and guidance documents can be found on the Petroc Community Grants page
<https://www.petroc.ac.uk/college-information/projects/community-grants>

Stage 1 Application

This is used to determine your organisations eligibility. Once eligibility is confirmed by Petroc you can start your Stage 2 Application. Your stage 1 application can be electronically signed.

Stage 2 Application

This is where you tell us the details of your project proposal. This is submitted to a panel to decide whether it can be funded. You can find some useful guidance for completing this application in Appendix 1. Your stage 2 application must be printed and signed prior to submission.

There is no closing date for submission of applications, and Petroc encourages applications all year round. However, you may wish to consider the following dates to assist you with your planning.

Application window	Applications received by:	Assessed by Grant Panel:	Decision made by:	Grant awarded by: (contracts and due diligence to be finalised)
1	3 rd July 2019	24 th July 2019	31 st July 2019	31 st August 2019
2	3 rd September 2019	24 th September 2019	1 st October 2019	1 st November 2019
3	25 th November 2019	16 th December 2019	20 th December 2019	31 st January 2020
4	3 rd March 2020	24 th March 2020	31 st March 2020	30 th April 2020
5	3 rd June 2020	24 th June 2020	1 st July 2020	1 st August 2020
6	3 rd September 2020	24 th September 2020	1 st October 2020	1 st November 2020

Assessing your Application

Once we have received your application and supporting documents, it will be assessed by our panel. The panel will consist of one LEP member, one Petroc member of staff (not a member of the Projects team) and one member from your local area.

They will check your application against the eligibility criteria, and make an assessment on how your application demonstrates each area. Please see Appendix 2 for the criteria which will be used to score applications.

Following an assessment of your application, the panel will produce a report for the Petroc Vice Principal, and make a recommendation as to whether your project is suitable for funding. Petroc's Vice Principal will then give final approval of projects.

Making sure our decisions are fair

We don't publish the names of our Panel members to make sure individuals aren't lobbied by projects for support. We also make sure our Panel attend training to understand the marking criteria and sign a declaration of interest. Petroc will moderate decisions made by the Panel as required.

Decisions and feedback

We aim to inform you of the decision within 5 working days of the panel assessment deadline as stated in the table above, however if we are not able to meet this deadline Petroc will contact you to inform you of the reason why and when you will know the final decision.

Our decisions will fall into one of the following 3 categories:

1. Approved
2. Declined but invited to resubmit
3. Declined

Approved applications

Petroc will contact you to advise what steps you need to take to be able to accept the grant offer. This will include:

- **Due Diligence** – you will be asked to complete a Due Diligence exercise, which will check that your organisation meets minimum requirements, and that you have the right policies and procedures in place to make your project a success.
- **Budget Detail** – you will be asked to submit a budget spreadsheet confirming how you will spend the grant. It's really important that this is as accurate as possible, as we'll need to monitor your expenditure against this.
- **Attending a Briefing for New Grant Recipients** – you'll need to attend a briefing before we can release your funding. This will set you up with all the information you need to know in order to make the most of your grant.

Accepting the Grant

Once the above is in place, Petroc will issue a funding agreement for you to sign and return.

Declined but invited to resubmit

Based on the grading criteria in Appendix 2 your application may be declined but invited to resubmit with amendments. When this happens you will be provided with feedback on areas of your application that have not scored highly. Petroc will offer you guidance for any amendments required. The resubmission will then be submit to the panel for further consideration during the next application window.

Declined Applications

We want to fund as many projects as possible. We will always try to support eligible and impactful projects, and will only not fund an application with good reason.

The decision cannot be appealed, but organisations are encouraged to review the feedback they receive. The feedback will outline clearly any areas of concern or weakness in the application, and will indicate whether the project should consider resubmitting their application.

If we have suggested that a resubmission isn't advised, that does not necessarily mean that you can't submit another project idea. If you want to talk this through please get in touch with communitygrants@petroc.ac.uk.

Expectations of Successful Projects

As an ESF funded programme, there are a number of requirements of grant recipients which are designed to ensure that projects are spending funds appropriately, and that the funding is making a positive impact on participants.

Your project will be required to keep evidence showing:

- That the people you work with are eligible to receive European funding
- The work you've been doing with your participants
- How your participants are making progress, and what they do when they leave your project
- How you have spent the grant funding
- How you have made sure that participants know that the project has been supported by the European Social Fund
- How you have embedded the ESF Cross Cutting Themes of Sustainable Development and Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities

We will provide clear guidance and templates for successful organisations to enable them to provide the necessary project monitoring data and evidence, In addition, applicants and grant recipients will be able to access support from Petroc staff with specialisms in ESF to help them to successfully engage in the programme.

Briefings for new grant recipients

Before we release your first payment, you'll need to attend a briefing. At the briefing we will introduce you to the Petroc team and talk you through the requirements of the funding.

Monitoring your Project

Throughout the grant period, projects will be required to submit regular data and information to Petroc. We'll use this to check that you are on track, to report to the Education and Skills Funding Agency, and to track the wider impact and reach of the projects we have funded.

Grant recipients will need to be able to:

- Submit monthly data on their participants
- Complete a monthly report including spend
- Complete a final grant and budget report, and submit it along with evidence of expenditure and one or more case studies as appropriate
- Monitor and report on the ESF Cross Cutting Themes

Participant Information

It is a condition of all ESF Community Grants that your project collects and submits information on participants to Petroc on a monthly basis.

As part of the new grants training Petroc will introduce you to 3P where you will report this information.

How we use this information

Petroc will check and collate the data you record on 3P on a monthly basis.

We will use it to check your progress against the recruitment profile and results projection you submitted in your application. Projects which do not meet or make good progress against their milestones and targets

may have a portion of their grant withheld or clawed back. We will always try to support struggling projects to get back on track however – projects should let us know straight away if there are any issues. We may be able to offer you some support.

Petroc is required to submit the data on a monthly basis to the Education and Skills Funding Agency, who managed the overall grant fund. They will use this to check that the grant fund is making an impact on its participants, and reaching the communities who need it the most.

Financial Requirements

All Grant Recipients will be subject to audit and compliance checks by Petroc and potentially by the ESFA, DWP or European Commission. Petroc has extensive experience in both managing and delivering ESF and will therefore support Grant Recipients to ensure that these requirements are met.

The level of audit checks required will depend on the amount of grant awarded, the outcome of the due diligence exercise which Petroc will carry out and the level of ESF experience your organisation has. As a minimum all grants will be subject to one remote audit where we will ask you to upload the relevant evidence to our partner portal 3P and one on site audit where we will require you to have original documents available for checking. If any discrepancies are found as part of these audits, Petroc will work with you to ensure that these are resolved and that your processes are refined to make sure that errors are not repeated.

At the beginning of the grant, you will be required to provide payroll evidence for any staff who will be working on the project which shows the salary you have paid them and any associated on costs such as National Insurance and Pension contributions you have made on their behalf. This will allow us to calculate their total annual salary cost to your organisation and we will use this figure to calculate an agreed ESF hourly rate as per the guidance issued by the Managing Authority. You will also need to complete timesheets for any staff working on the project to show the hours and activities they have completed. Petroc will issue a template for you to do this and this template coupled with the agreed ESF hourly rate, will allow you to calculate the cost of this activity to the project.

All Grant Recipients will be required to maintain a complete audit trail detailing how all of the ESF monies have been spent and this will need to be reported to Petroc on a regular basis. At the end of each grant you will need to provide copies of appropriate documents that evidences the total spend such as invoices, receipts, staff timesheets etc and will need to be able to ensure that the original documents are securely archived in line with ESF requirements which we will advise you of.

Please note that you are only able to claim VAT costs if you cannot recover these costs from any other sources. You must also ensure that you do not claim any other funding for those activities paid for by the ESF Grant.

Marketing and Publicity

The European Social Fund takes publicity and branding very seriously, and sets out minimum requirements which each project must meet. Successful applicants will be provided with the relevant logos and detailed guidance for producing marketing and publicity materials. We'll also cover this in the briefing for new grant recipients.

Cross Cutting Themes

Sustainable Development and Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities are referenced to as Cross Cutting themes within the ESF programme. All ESF projects are required to ensure that these two themes are embedded throughout all aspects of delivery and Grant Recipients will need to be able to demonstrate how they have done this as part of the regular reporting to Petroc. Further information regarding the Cross Cutting Themes can be found here

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/832417/ESF_Cross_Cutting_Themes_guidance.pdf and Petroc will provide relevant templates and training in order to ensure that Grant Recipients are clear about the requirements.

Getting in touch

If after reading through the application guidance you have any further questions, please contact us at communitygrants@petroc.ac.uk or 01271 852428.

Appendix 1: Notes on completing the Stage 2

This section gives specific guidance for each section of the application form. Applicants should read this thoroughly before submitting their application.

Applicant and Business/Organisation Details

Please provide full details of applicant and business or organisation details.

Project Proposal

When completing this section of your application please ensure you cover the following areas.

- **Fit with Local Priorities**
 1. How project will meet local needs
 2. How project will target local skills shortages
 3. How project will target gaps in the local labour market
 4. How project will work alongside other existing support
- **Meeting the needs of local priority groups**
 1. Participants over 50 years of age
 2. Participants with disabilities
 3. Participants from Ethnic Minorities
 4. Participants who are female
- **Value for Money**
 1. Budget breakdown feasibility
 2. Cost per participant
 3. Use of existing facilities and services
 4. Expected legacy of the project
- **Capacity to Deliver**
 1. How well the application demonstrates capability and capacity to deliver the project. Is there a clear description of how the project will be managed and by whom?
 2. The timescales proposed and whether they are realistic. Do they reflect the scale and nature of the project?
 3. The project team experience and the likelihood that the proposed team will be able to deliver the project
 4. How will the team recognise and incorporate the cross cutting themes in the project

Appendix 2: Grant Assessment Framework

This section outlines the framework used to assess all grant applications. Applicants should consider this when completing their application.

Please note that whilst applications are scored for the purposes of shortlisting, scores will not be shared with applicants.

Overview

The panel will read your application and within each of the 4 areas listed in Appendix 1 they will score your application using the below grading criteria.

Score	Application Grade
5	Excellent
4	Good
3	Satisfactory
2	Weak
1	Unsatisfactory

Once all areas of your application have been graded a final score will be calculated using the below grading criteria. This score plus some written feedback on your application will be submitted to Petroc's Vice Principal for the final decision to be made.

Total score	Application grade	Suggested Recommendation
65-80	Excellent	Fund
49-64	Good	Fund
33-48	Satisfactory	Further Clarification with Petroc
17-32	Weak	Decline but invite organisation to resubmit with amendments
1-16	Unsatisfactory	Decline

Appendix 3: The Grant Process

