National Drugs Mission Funds Local Support Fund – Criteria and FAQ

Introduction

The numbers of drug-related deaths in Scotland are too high. These deaths are tragic and avoidable, and reducing them is a priority for all of us. To that effect, the Scottish Government launched the National Drugs Mission in 2021 to improve lives. The National Drugs Mission funds include the Improvement Fund, Local Support Fund, Local Support Fund Micro Grants, and Children & Families Fund which are delivered by the Corra Foundation. The total budget for this five-year mission was £65 million.

About the Local Support Fund (LSF)

LSF is focused on community-based organisations delivering frontline services to support people who use drugs, people who are in recovery and their families. It aims to facilitate rights-based, relational support for people so that they can easily access the right support at the right time.

The Scottish Government is aware that organisations providing this vital support often exist on shoestring budgets and are stretched to their limits. In some cases, the pandemic and cost of living crisis may have pushed these budgets further. It is hoped that this extra funding can help to provide more security. This fund is intended to help these organisations to stabilise or increase capacity, extend services and provide further reach into the community.

Applications for continuation funding only will be welcomed in 2025. However, **continuation funding can only be provided until October 2026** so project budgets may need to be adjusted to fit this timescale. It may not always be possible to satisfy the demand for funding, and this may result in some awards being agreed for a shorter grant period. This will only be done after a conversation with the applicant.

The closing date for applications will be 1pm on Wednesday 3rd September 2025. Applications received after this will not be considered.

Who can apply:

- The Scottish Government is committed to the sustainability of projects, as such, the Local Support Fund (LSF) is **only** open to existing projects that have been funded through previous funding rounds and have a LSF grant ending **before 31st March 2026** in this funding round.
- Funded projects must still be active at the point of application, with any associated staff members still in place.
- Applicants can be charities, social enterprises, community groups and other voluntary organisations that have independent governance and an asset lock.
- Applicants must be currently delivering frontline services in Scotland to support people who use drugs, people in recovery and/or their families.
- Corra Foundation encourages applications from organisations supporting Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities, and other underrepresented groups, to increase access to support.

What can be funded:

- Funding of up to £50,000 (for one year) can be requested for the continuation or expansion of the work funding was previously awarded for. **For projects applying for continuation funding with a term of less than one year, the amount available will be proportionately less.**
- Priority will be given to applications for projects that are closest to their grant's end-date.
- Applicants are encouraged to only apply for what they need as this will allow the fund to support as many different groups as possible.
- Funding can be used for existing or expanded service delivery, general running costs, staffing, equipment, etc. As grants will be made for the continuation of existing funded work, we expect the size of funding requests to be similar to the existing grants.

What **cannot** be funded:

- Work that will be delivered beyond **31st October 2026**. Proposals and budgets should be tailored to include only work that will occur prior to that date.
- Projects with a Local Support Fund grant that ended before March 2025.
- Projects that have already received 5 years' funding from the National Drugs Mission.
- Work that will **not** deliver support to people affected by drug use or their families.
- Projects that have **not** previously been funded through the Local Support Fund.
- Major capital appeals including building projects, vehicles and major refurbishment costs.
- Retrospective funding – paying for something that has already been purchased/delivered.
- Contributions to funds which will be used for grant making to other organisations.
- Places/stays in residential rehabilitations for individuals.
- Funding cannot be used as matched funding for a project already supported through Scottish Government funds. Please speak to one of Corra's Grant Advisors if you are unsure.
- Only one application per organisation will be considered unless each application is for work in a different Local Authority area.

How to Apply

Please email wellbeingteam@corra.scot to arrange a chat with one of the Corra team. Our Grant Advisors will be able to help guide you through the application process and offer advice on whether your idea is a good fit for the fund.

Following your conversation with one of Corra's Grant Advisors, a link to the online application form will then be sent on to you.

We are not able to look at draft applications, so it is best to chat to us before you complete the form.

Timescales

The closing date for applications will be 1pm on Wednesday 3rd September 2025. Applications received after this will not be considered.

We aim to notify applicants of the outcome of their application within two months of their application being sent in.

Monitoring and Evaluation

You will be asked to report three months after the start of your grant and at the end of the grant period. We will share information (like progress reports) about your project with your local ADP. Reporting templates will be provided.

Corra will work with each grantee to create an Evaluation Planning Grid (EPG) for their project. This document will form the basis for reports. This might be identical to the EPG for the existing grant. A sample EPG can be found in Appendix 3 of this document.

Projects are expected to have robust evaluation processes in place. The application form will specifically ask for details of the key outcomes/differences the project will make and the evaluation processes that will be used to measure these. Costs associated with the evaluation of work can be included in the grant request.

Partnership Working

Alcohol and Drug Partnerships (ADPs) are responsible for commissioning evidence-based, person-centered and recovery-focused treatment and support services to meet the needs of their populations, so it can be useful to build connections with them.

You will need to contact your ADP Lead so they can provide their perspective on your funded project. **Please do this early, as this could take longer than expected**. You will be able to send in your application without this, as long as it is provided later.

You can see who your local ADP is by following this link.

Good Practice

Corra and the Scottish Government are committed to principles of effective governance, transparency, and good practice. We look for organisations to be able to show their commitment to:

- Listening to people with lived experience of the issues you work on and ensuring their views are at the heart of your approach.
- Understanding the difference that the work of your organisation makes to people's lives.
- Working with others, networking, sharing learning and avoiding duplication.
- Respecting the safety of vulnerable groups via effective safeguarding procedures.
- Being open to adapting delivery in the face of changing circumstances.
- Operating with openness and clear accountability.
- Complying with any relevant regulation or inspection.
- Implementing equal opportunities policies and valuing diversity, equity and inclusion, including in relation to recruitment.
- Being a responsible employer.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

See Appendix 2 of this document.

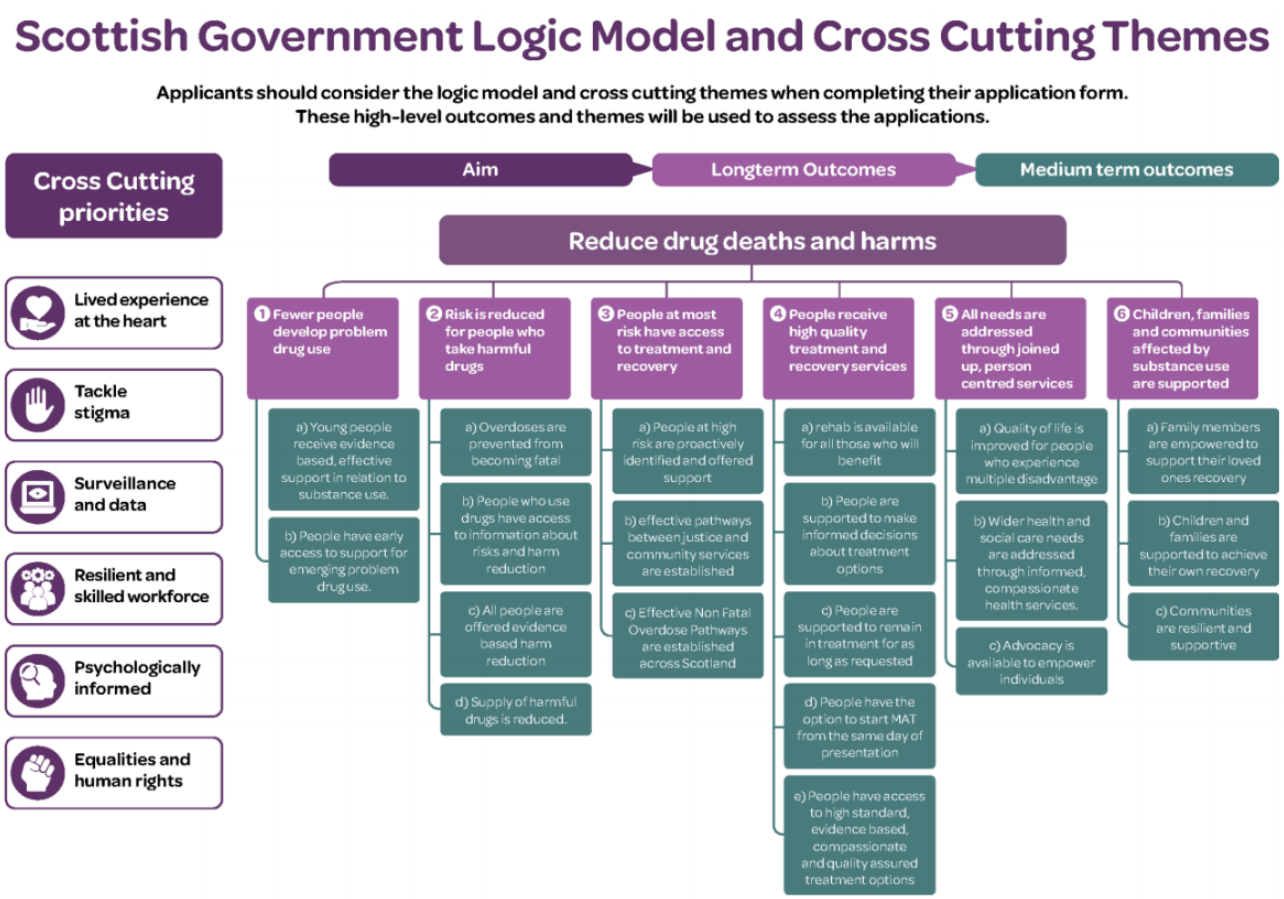
Further information

The team is always happy to talk, whether it's about an application, or a grant you already hold. Please get in touch by emailing wellbeingteam@corra.scot.

If you have any questions which are not covered in the FAQ document, please contact us by email. If you'd like more detailed information or support with your application, you can book a one-to-one funding advice session by phone or video chat. Support may also be available through the Scottish Drugs Forum by e-mailing localsupportfund@sdf.org.uk.

Appendix 1

The Scottish Government has outlined key cross cutting priorities that will make most impact on drug related deaths and harm. In your application, you should make sure to outline how your project will contribute to these priorities.



Appendix 2: Frequently Asked Questions

Eligibility Questions:

We are a new organisation with no accounts available. Can we still apply?

These funds are for organisations that are currently delivering services and who already hold a grant through the Local Support Fund. If an eligible organisation is already delivering services but has yet to produce accounts, an application can be made. Instead of accounts, please give us an indication of the financial position of the organisation at the time of applying, and a budget for the current year.

We've previously received funding from a National Drugs Mission fund, can we still apply?

Yes. You may apply to the Local Support Fund for continuation of your existing LSF project. The funding requested should cover service delivery from the end of your existing grant to 31st October 2026.

The people we work with are affected by drug and alcohol problems – can we apply?

These funds are specifically for work to support people who use drugs, people in recovery and their families. We understand that this may involve supporting a range of issues, but the predominant factor must be someone's drug use.

We deliver lots of different projects in our community, but not all of them are for people who use drugs. Can we apply?

Yes, if your project already holds a grant through the Local Support Fund programme. You can apply for the existing funded project you deliver which is focused on supporting people who use drugs and/or their families.

Although we are applying for a grant, our partners will be delivering some of the work. Can we still apply?

Yes, as long as the applicant organisation is managing the grant and the work and is responsible for reporting. However, you cannot apply for grants on behalf of another organisation. For partnerships, any one of the partners could apply, as long as they are eligible and take responsibility for managing the grant. We will not fund multiple partners for the same project.

The charity I work with is not registered with OSCR (Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator), but with the Charity Commission in England and Wales. Can we still apply?

No, if you are operating in Scotland as a charity, you must be registered with OSCR.

General Questions:

What does it mean to be 'incorporated'?

Organisations which are incorporated have a legal personality which means they are able to enter into contracts, employ staff, incur debts, own property, sue and be sued. Being incorporated also provides a high degree of protection against liability. Typical examples of incorporated organisations are Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisations (SCIOs) and registered companies.

What do you mean by 'lived experience'?

By 'lived experience' we mean people who have first-hand knowledge and understanding, gained through personal – rather than professional – experience of drug use. This includes people affected by their own drug use, as well as family members who are affected by a relative's drug use.

We're making an application for a project we deliver that fits the criteria – can we include some core running costs?

Yes, you can include a reasonable proportion of core running costs that are necessary for the project – this is known as full cost recovery.

Do we have to start using the funding right away?

Yes. We expect work relating to a grant application to start immediately or at the end of the grant period for the existing grant.

What are the reporting requirements?

We will ask for a final report at the end of the grant period. There is also an initial 3-month report. Reporting templates will be provided.

What is Corra's assessment process?

After the closing date, Corra staff assess the application. This means we read and analyse your application, checking to see if it fits the criteria, doing due diligence checks on your organisation's finances and checking things like your policies, approach to service delivery and the ways you keep people safe.

We then take each application to our panels of experts. These people are experts either by lived or professional experience, or both. They use their knowledge and experience to tell us if your proposal is likely to work and make a meaningful difference to the people we want to support. For the Local Support Fund and Micro Fund, this is the final stage in the assessment process.

After that, we can let applicants know about the outcome of their application.

If I am unsuccessful, will I be given feedback?

Yes, you will receive an email outlining the outcome and feedback. Corra staff will also be happy to provide further feedback by telephone.

Appendix 3: Sample Evaluation Planning Grid

The Evaluation Planning Grid (EPG) is a tool to help you think about how you will measure and report back on your work. Following any grant offer we will work with you to complete this grid. This example is intended to demonstrate how the EPG may be completed and to provide guidance on the way content is worded. The outcomes, indicators and targets selected for each project should be **specific to the project** and **appropriate to the scale** of that project. The purpose of this document is to aid in the planning of your monitoring and evaluation. This should make reporting more straightforward. Project-specific outcomes often align with one or more of the Outcome Themes shown on the next page.

Outcomes (These are **your predicted changes.** Please use the column below to list the 3 main changes you expect to see in participants' lives as a result of your service.)	**Indicators?** (These are **your indicators of success.** What type of feedback will you look for to indicate these changes are happening? What can your workers observe? Please list 2-3 key indicators for each change.)	**Measurement of indicators** (These are **your monitoring and evaluation tools**. Please list the tools and methods you will use to capture the changes being made, e.g. surveys, informal feedback, staff observations, focus groups etc.)	**Outputs** (These are **your services and activities**. Please list the activities that you will deliver to make each change happen.)	**Targets** (These are **your target numbers**. How many activities will you deliver each year? How often will they take place? How many people will take part in each of them?)	**Measurement of outputs** (These are **your record keeping methods**. How and where will you record all relevant data? E.g. attendance numbers in an attendance log, feedback in worker's notes etc. Please specify.)
Service users are better engaged with support	People receiving support report satisfaction with the support they receive. Staff members observe increased engagement with support. Workers with other organisations report	Service user feedback questionnaire Anecdotal feedback Outcome Star tool (baseline and follow up) Conversations with workers from other organisations. Staff feedback.	1:1 Support sessions Group Support sessions Informal discussions Flyers produced Support plans	150 1:1 support sessions are delivered each year 50 Group support sessions are delivered each year 75 Service users receive support. Support plan created for each service user.	Team diary Log of support sessions Workers' notes Service users' files

Outcome Themes

Reports on the work of the National Drugs Mission funded projects as a whole, are compiled based on the following outcome themes.

1. Fewer people develop problem drug use.
2. Risk is reduced for people who take harmful drugs.
3. People at most risk have access to treatment and recovery.
4. People receive high quality treatment and recovery services.
5. Quality of life is improved by addressing multiple disadvantages.
6. Children, families and communities affected by substance use are supported.