

Open and trusting grant-making progress report

2022-2023



At Corra we're committed to being the best grant maker we can be. Supportive and trusting relationships are a key part of [our ways of working](#).

One of our ways of working is our commitment to [Open and Trusting Grant Making](#). The focus is on being flexible, supportive, and accessible to all applicants and grantholders. We measure ourselves against this based on feedback from applicants and grantholders.

Each year we share our progress by tracking our actions, responding to ongoing feedback and highlighting work still to do.

"Continue being as approachable and friendly. It was excellent to see you want to support and not try to make the process any more challenging than funding applications can be."

Survey respondent



Improvements made in 2022-2023

Based on feedback received in 2021-22 we:



Acknowledged all applications and reports. Focused on providing straightforward feedback. Written feedback was provided to all unsuccessful applicants.



Ensured all our forms were in plain English. 77% of survey respondents said they felt application materials were very or extremely easy to read and understand.



Revised our website to ensure information was easy to follow. For each fund we aim to provide easily accessible criteria, an eligibility checker and explain the decision-making process.



Payments made within 10 working days. 76% of all payments were made within 10 working days of grant conditions being met.



Progressed our commitment to accessible and equitable grant-making processes for all. Incorporating lessons initially through our own Henry Duncan Grants.

Each year, Corra gathers feedback from applicants and grantholders through our applicant and grantholder survey. Corra's commitment is to use the feedback from this to improve our practices, making applicant and grantholder experiences of working with Corra positive.

Who responded to the survey?

The survey was open to all applicants and grantholders in September 2022. We heard from organisations across the whole of Scotland.



210 responses



33% are volunteers.



50% from organisations led by people with shared heritage/culture/identity.



45% of respondents to our survey had applied to multiple funds.



41% were in receipt of a grant when they completed the survey.

What you told us about our application process



46% of respondents felt that the application form was either easy or very easy to complete. This was down from 63% in the previous year.



77% of respondents felt that the application material was either easy or very easy to understand. This was down from 81% in the previous year.

Feedback through the applicant and grantholder survey from last year told us that the process of completing application forms was **more difficult**. People told us about barriers including lengthy questions, and restrictive word counts. We heard that for some applicants, including people with dyslexia, all this made applying much harder. We are committed to increasing accessibility and recognise we need to do more.

We know that the changes we made to the Henry Duncan Grants application form in 2023 have made a difference. We plan to role the processes from this across our other funds.

“Engaging through videos or YouTube is our only way of accessing instructions to apply for funding. Attending networking seminars is difficult since our available time is very limited.”

Survey respondent



Before opening Henry Duncan Grants in 2023, we spoke to groups about how we could make the application process more accessible. We made changes to application materials so that they were easier to navigate and could be accessed by screen readers.

This included:

- Increasing font size to 14 by changing the coding in the application form.
- Deciding when to put questions on new pages.
- Where checkbox options were provided, selecting the most suitable layout.

We made other changes to the funding programme to support groups to apply.

These included:

- Providing a Word version of the application.
- Including our 'How To' guide in a Word format document.
- Offering extra support to applicants throughout the application process.
- Dedicated information session for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic led organisations applying for a Henry Duncan Project grant.

What we commit to doing in 2024

Our commitment to you is that we make our forms easier to complete. We will

- Embed the steps introduced in making our Henry Duncan Grant application form more accessible across our programmes.
- Work with partners to ensure any question asked is clear on why and how the information will be used.
- Continue to offer and promote alternative formats and assistance with applicant forms. This might include different ways to apply or a call with a Grants Advisor for applications.

What you told us about the Importance of Relationships

- ➔ **80%** of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Corra listens and responds to feedback.
- ↓ **93%** of people felt Corra understood the context and priorities of their organisation. Slightly down from **94%** in the previous year.

Most people told us Corra staff were friendly, helpful and knowledgeable. This is important to us as we want applicants and grant holders to know we are here to help. However only **64%** of people responding to the survey in 2022 told us that they felt comfortable in contacting us. We want to change this, so everyone finds it easy to speak with us.

"I feel that overall, we have been well supported by Corra and the relationship between our organisations is equal, open and strong."

Survey respondent



What we commit to doing in 2024

Our commitment to you is that we are an accessible funder who you can contact at any time. We will:

- Be available at times that suit organisations. Our team can make evening appointments.
- Ensure our email addresses are clearly displayed on our website and on any communications with applicants.
- Continue to dedicate time to targeted and tailored information and pre-application support.

What you told us about our funding commitments and approach

You told us of the increased value of multi-year funding and the vital need for core and unrestricted funding. In 2022 Corra made **103** new multi-year grants and only **25%** of funding distributed by Corra was restricted to projects.

While we know this is positive, we still were only able to distribute **4%** of funding as unrestricted. We know unrestricted funding is important and will endeavour to increase our flexibility to help alleviate some of the pressures faced by organisations.

Building on feedback from previous funding rounds The Promise Partnership increased the length of funding from 12 months to 18 months.

The Household Hardship Fund made a 5% contribution 'on top' of the grant amount, and groups could choose to use this 5% however it was needed.

What we commit to doing in 2024

Our commitment to you is that we will strive to offer flexible funding and ensure funding is delivered in a timely manner. In 2024, we will:

- Whenever possible offer flexible and/or unrestricted funding.
- Work with our partners to promote the value of flexible and multi-year funding models that allow long term changes to be supported.
- Where possible, ensure grants include an amount toward operating costs.

What you told us about reporting to Corra

We believe that reporting should be an enabler to help you tell the story of your work. It was good to hear that **87%** of respondents to the grantholder survey told us that when we offered a reporting template it was very easy or easy to complete. We aim to ensure that reporting is proportionate and that information we ask for is used. When you report to us we learn from your responses and apply this to improve our practices. This contributes to the changes we all want for Scotland.

In 2023 Corra published two reports sharing the learning and experiences of funded groups. The [Impact of Micro Grants Report](#) used evidence from over 600 reports from small community led groups across Scotland and helped shape our approach to funding small community-led groups. We also published a [National Drugs Mission Funds Progress Report](#) which shared the progress of organisations and individuals supported through the fund. This report also highlighted the barriers

faced by these funded projects. These themes were shared in the report and used to help shape the capacity building offer delivered through the fund.

However, only **53%** of people responding to the survey in 2022 told us that reporting felt proportionate to the size of grant. We are committed to making all our reporting requirements less bureaucratic including when and how often we ask groups to report.



77% of people said that the reporting guidance was clear and easy to understand. This is down from **95%** last year.



20% of respondents to the survey told us about their reporting experience.



367 organisations who shared reports in 2022 told us about the difference their work made to the people they support.

What we commit to doing in 2024

To enable people to spend more time delivering and less time reporting, we will continue to:

- Work with our partners to embed [Harmonising Reporting](#) principles across all our funds.
- Provide information on reporting requirements when you apply and in grant offer letters.
- Ensure we give at least six weeks' notice reminders of when reporting is due.
- Be clear on why and how the information we ask for will be used.
- Implement alternative and accessible ways to tell us about progress. We will do this by learning from experiences of different formats being delivered in several of our funds including sharing progress through group conversations, using visuals and blogs, and conversations with our staff.

Relevant and helpful support (capacity building)

Corra believes that training and support must be helpful, relevant and a good use of people's time. You have told that you benefit most from learning and support from your peers and guidance to strengthen your organisation.

However, we have heard consistently over the last two years that the primary reason people are unable to attend training or networking is due to the time commitment needed. **38%** to our 2022 survey said time was the primary reason for not attending. This is up from **25%** in the previous

year. It is therefore vital that any offer of support provided by Corra is accessible, remains proportionate to your needs and is optional.



20% of respondents to the survey told us about their experience of capacity building.



61% of these respondents had attended some form of capacity building delivered by Corra.



19% of respondents said topics covered in sessions were not relevant. This was up from **12%** in the previous year.

“We would find it helpful to have an opportunity to discuss our idea to check that it aligns with the goals of the fund ahead of applying.”

Survey respondent

Further analysis has also offered greater insight into the different needs of groups applying to smaller funds (primarily community-led groups).

Support people wanted:

- Networking.
- Information sessions for non-English speakers.
- Help on applying (eligibility, multi-year).

Respondents applying to small grants suggested:

- Support on developing budgets.
- Help to open bank accounts for non-constituted groups.
- Governance, finances, social media/publicity.

What we commit to doing in 2024

We also want to support grant holders with development opportunities and networking– we call this capacity building. We try to organise capacity building that is appropriate to the size and sector of the organisations taking part. We commit to:

- Use the feedback from our 2022 survey to further engage with community with shared heritage/culture/identity to develop a programme of support that is accessible to their needs.

- Create or signpost applicants and grantholders to further resources that will support their organisation.
- Continue to deliver pre-application support in different ways (including recording information sessions).

Open and Trusting Principles

The commitments and actions we take from this report focus on how we support every applicant and grantholder engaged with Corra. In the last year Corra has:



1258
organisations
applied



2015
applications



24 funding
programmes



39 days from
application to
decision

In this report we have told you about the improvements we made and our refreshed commitments for 2024. You can read our full commitments [Open and trusting grant-making - Flexible Funders - IVAR UK](#). We will continue to prioritise actions to make funding fairer and more accessible.

As part of our open and trusting principles we have taken steps to look at diversity, equity and inclusion within our grantmaking. We will build from this in 2024 by connecting, listening and responding to communities that are often least heard. You can learn more on this work in our [DEI Progress Report for 2023](#).

We know how important it is to you for us to be open in how and what we fund. This is core to our commitment to building trusting relationships with you.



92% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Corra is clear when managing funds on behalf of others.



94% of respondents said they felt their grant offer letter was extremely or very clear. **96%** in the previous year.



97% of people felt Corra's grant offer was clear. This is slightly up from **96%** in the previous year.

We want to support every organisation that connects with Corra in a way that builds trust and respect. We will continue to engage to ask how this experience feels to you. We will also continue to share our experiences and lessons to promote and support open and trusting grantmaking.

Grant funding can be quite daunting.... Very specific programme requirements can represent barriers to progress. ... Make it easier for organisations to obtain funding, as they already know what they need to do and the communities they support.

Survey respondent

Our commitments to open and trusting grant-making

We will continue to ensure our processes are proportionate, streamlined, and equitable. Over the course of 2024 we will:

- Work on our application forms to ensure each question is focused, clearly worded and necessary to help us understand your work.
- Build on the learning this year in making our Henry Duncan Grants application process more accessible and apply good practice across our grant programmes.
- Continue to try and give feedback on applications that will be helpful to groups in future applications.
- Continue to ensure payments are made within ten working days of receipt of grant conditions being met.
- Continue to implement alternative and accessible ways to tell us about progress.
- Engage with communities with shared heritage/background/culture to shape a programme of support that feels accessible and helpful.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the 2022 survey. Over half provided additional written responses to our questions offering helpful suggestions to our grant-making practices. We heard further insights into some of the barriers faced by organisations in applying, reporting and grant holder support.

About Corra Foundation

Corra Foundation exists to make a difference to the lives of people and communities. It works with others to encourage positive change, opportunity, fairness and growth of aspirations which improve quality of life. Corra wants to see a society in which people create positive change and enjoy fulfilling lives.

In 2020 Corra launched a ten-year strategy. It is long term because making a difference on the big challenges will take time. At its heart is the strong belief that when people find their voice, they unlock the power to make change happen.

Our ways of working

At Corra we have a set of principles that we strive to put into practice across our roles as an employer, independent funder, charity and partner, as well as in our influencing activity.

We will:

- Listen and respond to people, communities and organisations and amplify voices that are less well heard – their wisdom is at the heart of Corra's approach.
- Build relationships, always working alongside others on the basis of shared power, mutual trust and shared learning.
- Pursue diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), trying to challenge structural discrimination and contribute to radical shifts in the funding sector.
- Be an open, trusting and flexible grant maker.
- Ensure we contribute to tackling climate change, through our investments, operations and grant making and encouraging others to take action alongside us.
- Be bold, taking considered risks and supporting others to do the same.

Date of publication: 16/10/2023

Corra Foundation
Office Suite 30 Pure Offices
4 Lochside Way
Edinburgh EH12 9DT
e: hello@corra.scot
t: 0131 444 4020
w: www.corra.scot



www.corra.scot

(The) Corra Foundation is a charity registered in Scotland (No SC009481) and is also a company limited by guarantee (No SC096068).