

Sandwell Digital Survey Microgrants

Guidance Notes

1. Introduction

Voluntary and Community organisations in Sandwell are invited to support partnership efforts to tackle digital exclusion in the borough - helping the Council and VCS leaders to better understand what support Sandwell residents need to get online. In order to facilitate the gathering of resident input and feedback, SCVO microgrants are available to help groups to cover some of the costs that might be involved.

Recent figures suggest that across the UK over 10% of households do not have the digital skills for everyday life (source: Ofcom) and indications are that in Sandwell this percentage is much higher. Sandwell Council and partners are now considering how this challenge can be met through the development of a new Digital Strategy, which will build on the learning of many community-based projects that have supported residents with their digital skills, both during the Covid pandemic and since.

The starting point for this planning work is to gain a clearer picture of what barriers residents and communities face and what they feel will help them to utilise digital and all the benefits this can offer them.

Microgrants are available for local community groups, charities and not-for-profits for micro-grants that will fund engagement activity with residents who are not online or not using digital. The funding will enable staff and volunteers to support residents to complete a simple survey, with a minimum expectation of 15 surveys for each microgrant.

SCVO is a local charity working across the borough of Sandwell with a mission to help local residents and communities access support, which enables them to take greater control of their lives, overcome challenges and make the most of opportunities available to them.

Supporting individual residents to complete the Digital Survey

Participating organisations will outline within their application a target group of people – whether these are clients/ services users, activity participants, or members of the wider community – who are known to be (or suspected to be) lacking the skills, confidence, connectivity or equipment to go online. The task is to assist these residents to complete a survey around their views and experiences of accessing online resources and using digital tools.

This survey will be provided electronically via a link to an online form. The survey covers the resident's past experience of using computers, laptops or smartphones, what interests and motivations they might have for going online, what barriers or concerns they face, and what support they would welcome to help them with skills, confidence and accessibility. The survey is anonymous but does include a few questions on the non-identifiable aspects of the resident's profile including their age bracket, ethnicity and location.

Organisation staff will need a digital device (computer, laptop, tablet or smartphone) with which to support residents in completing the survey. Staff should ensure that all questions are understood and answered as fully as required. Each survey should take between 5-10 minutes to complete.

Funding of £300 is available to organisations and groups able to engage a minimum of 15 residents to complete the survey.

Funding of £650 is available to organisations and groups able to engage a minimum of 30 residents to complete the survey.

Grant Eligibility

Eligibility for funding is limited to voluntary, community and not-for-profit/ charitable organisations that fit within the definition of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) as detailed in [Appendix 1](#).

If you are in any doubt as to your eligibility, please telephone/email (see below) to seek clarification.

2. Notes on Completing the Application Form

Please read through the relevant application form and these guidance notes **BEFORE** you begin so that you answer the questions as fully as possible.

- **Please do not exceed the word count** on the questions, as we would like applications to be as focused as possible. There is no **minimum** word count, but the more relevant information you can provide to the panel the better they will understand your organisation and proposal.
- Do not assume that the Grant Panel knows your organisation, even if your organisation has received funding from SCVO or Sandwell Council in the past.
- Please complete **ALL** questions and sections within the application form.

Q1. Describe who you aim to engage through this activity

Tell us the profile of those residents you expect to engage with, for example their age bracket, ethnic origin, gender, etc... and how you know or suspect that they are digitally excluded.

Q2. Describe how you propose to engage residents in completing the survey

Tell us what you are planning: will you be engaging an existing group of residents within a regular or already-planned activity or event? Or will you organise something new and bring people together specifically to complete the survey?

Monitoring and Evaluation (for all grants)

When you finish your engagement activity, we will ask you for some information.

- To tell us the number of people who have completed the survey.
- To give us some short evaluation feedback on the grants process.
- Complete a short 'Provider Survey' to help us gauge your capacity and appetite for further digital engagement support work with residents and communities.

3. Grant Timeline and Process

- Applicants may only have ONE grant in delivery at any point.
- The grant programme is launched on Tuesday 28th March 2023.
- The Application Form and Guidance Notes can be found on SCVO's website www.scvo.info
- Applications can be made at any time between 28th March 2023 and 10th June 2023. Please email the completed application and supporting paperwork to: grants@scvo.info
- Applications will be assessed by the Grant Panel on a rolling basis with the aim of informing applicants of the outcome within 7 days of their application.
- The Grant Panel will set out to fund engagement activities across the diversity of Sandwell's communities, targeting in particular those residents and communities who are digitally excluded.
- Feedback will be offered to ALL applicants, whether successful or unsuccessful.
- PLEASE NOTE - that due to the short timeframe for this grant programme, the Grant Panel will allocate funding broadly on a first-come first-served basis until the grant funds are spent. Therefore, an early application is advised to increase the chance of a successful outcome.
- Successful applicants will be sent the necessary electronic link and guidance for the survey.
- Successful applicants will also be asked to sign and return a copy of the Grant Terms and Conditions, together with relevant Bank details, so that grant payment can be made.
- ALL ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY MUST BE COMPLETED AND RELEVANT INFORMATION SENT BACK TO SCVO BY FRIDAY 23RD JUNE 2023 AT THE LATEST.
- SCVO will request monitoring feedback by email from each successful applicant at the close of the programme.

For all enquiries / conversations before making your application, please contact SCVO as follows:

- **Community Partnerships Coach:** Liz Webster – email: liz@scvo.info / mobile: 07923 259821
- Or
- **Operations Manager / Deputy CEO:** Stuart Ashmore – email: stuart@scvo.info / mobile: 07703 823226

APPENDIX 1 – Definition of the Voluntary and Community Sector

To be eligible to apply to the SCVO Vision 2030 Community Grants programme, you will need to be one of the following types of organisation:

- **A voluntary organisation/group** (a formal organisation run by a management body made up of volunteers who are engaged in that activity for environmental, economic or social good.)
- **A community organisation/group** (a less formally organised body run by a management body made up of volunteers who are engaged in that activity for environmental, economic or social good.)
- **A tenants and residents group**
- **A faith group**
- **Most co-operatives and social enterprises** (provided all profits are retained for the benefit of the members or community served)
- **Most sports organisations**

... **and** have one or more of the following structures/forms:

- **Unincorporated groups** (that have a written constitution/set of rules (governing document) that sets out the purpose of the group and how it is managed)
- **Registered charity** (incl. CIO)
- **Company limited by guarantee**
- **Community Interest Company (CIC) limited by guarantee**
- **Community Interest Company (CIC) limited by shares** (with a 100% asset lock clause to ensure that funds or assets can only be transferred to a named organisation or cause with charitable objects aligned to the applicant)
- **Community Benefit Society** with charitable status
- **Co-operative**

Additionally, organisations need to be able to demonstrate that they:

- operate on the basis of being wholly not-for-profit and/or do not distribute profits/assets for personal or private gain;
- have a Board or Management Committee comprising of a minimum of 3 members (ideally unrelated) who give their time in a voluntary (unpaid) capacity. If this Committee is not locally based, the organisation should demonstrate its long-term commitment to Sandwell;
- are actively delivering services in Sandwell or undertaking activities for the benefit of Sandwell Communities;
- principally reinvest any financial surpluses to further social, environmental or cultural objectives that bring a significant community benefit to Sandwell (at least 50% of any financial surpluses need to be reinvested in Sandwell for community benefit).

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