



Social Enterprise Boost Fund Guidance for Applicants

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in applying for the Social Enterprise Boost Fund. This guide will help you understand the grants available, who can apply, the type of activities the funding can support, the information we will need from you, and how we will assess your application.

Social Enterprise Boost Fund Overview

The Social Enterprise Boost Fund (SEBF) will provide targeted support for social enterprises in six local authority areas in England.

The fund will achieve this through capacity building support and onward grant funding to local social entrepreneurs to kick-start and grow social enterprise activity in six local authority areas.

The outcomes of the activity delivered through SEBF will build the evidence base on scalable and sustainable place-based interventions that work to grow the social enterprise sector and better understand how social enterprises support communities and economies in disadvantaged areas.

The objectives of the Social Enterprise Boost Fund are, by March 2025, to:

- Grow the social enterprise sector in targeted areas, by supporting the creation of new social enterprises and boosting early-stage organisations.
- Enable targeted local authorities and the local voluntary and community sector in these places to implement sustainable systems and processes that encourage social enterprise growth.

Build and disseminate evidence on:

- scalable and sustainable place-based interventions that work in growing the social enterprise sector in these areas; and
- the extent to which and how social enterprises support communities and economies in these areas.

More information about the fund and areas of delivery is available on the [gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk).



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1. About the Social Enterprise Boost Fund Awards

The SE Boost Fund grants help new social entrepreneurs in Sunderland and South Tyneside start and grow their businesses. The available funding can help pay for start-up costs of up to a maximum of **£10,000**.

There are three levels of funding you can apply for, depending on the stage and needs of your idea/business.

- **Try.** These are grants of up to **£1000** to help cover costs to pilot an idea. Try grants are for you if your idea is at an early stage and you want to explore its potential.
- **Kickstart.** These grants of up to **£5000** will help you cover the costs of setting up a social enterprise. If you have already set up your business, Kick Start grants can help you with development costs, such as training and equipment.
- **Grow.** You can apply for a Grow grant of up to **£5000** if you have previously received a Kick Start grant. You must demonstrate that additional funding would allow you to develop or consolidate your idea.

The grants are designed to help you progress as your idea develops. You can apply for a Try grant first, followed by Kick Start and Grow. However, the maximum amount you can receive is £10,000. For example, if you secured a £1,000 Try and a £5000 Kick Start grants, the maximum Grow grant you could apply for is £4000.

The funding opens in the summer of 2023 and will operate on a rolling basis until 27 September 2024. This means that you can apply at any time during this period and will usually receive a decision within 12 weeks. Regardless of when you submit your application, you will need to spend all the funding you secure before the programme closes on 28 February 2025.

The Social Enterprise Boost Fund also offers free business support provided by PNE. We strongly recommend that you access and make the most of the support before applying for funding. Based on our experience of running similar funding programmes, applicants who engage with business support significantly improve their chances of success.

You can apply for one-to-one support or learn about their upcoming events by visiting the [PNE website](#).



2. The application form by sections

Section One: Eligibility and Criteria

The fund is open to early-stage social enterprises and individuals seeking to set up a new social enterprise.

To be eligible, your **existing social enterprise**:

- has been trading for five years or less
- has a turnover of less than £250,000 in their last financial year
- is incorporated and registered on Companies House with a UK-registered office
- has a governing document which demonstrates that they are a social enterprise under the following government definition: a social enterprise is a business with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or the community rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners
- has a bank account with at least two signatories in the enterprise's name.

NB. Unincorporated or voluntary organisations not registered with Companies House can apply by following the process for applying as an individual (see below). You must nominate someone from the organisation to apply for the funding in their name.

If applying as **an individual**, you are eligible if you:

- Seek to set up a new social enterprise (fitting the above government definition).
- Are aged 18 or over;
- Are based in the UK; and
- have a bank account in your name

Funding Criteria

We can support your application if it meets the following criteria:

- Meets local needs and improves pride in place and/or social connections in the area - by 'local', we mean that your application delivers the majority of its social or environmental benefit within one or both of the following local authority areas:
 - Sunderland
 - South TynesideLocal means that we expect you to deliver at least 75% of your activities within one or both areas. If you are unsure about this, please get in touch with us.
- Demonstrates robust delivery plans and an understanding of project finances
- Demonstrates value for money



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- Provides evidence of how you will learn from your proposed activities and demonstrate that you can sustain your activities over the long term (i.e. how your project will generate income to keep going once you have spent the grant money).

In addition – if your project requires premises to start trading, you must have identified a property and be able to confirm an agreement in principle.

Moving through the funding levels

Additional criteria apply if you have already received a grant from the SE Boost Fund and would like to apply to the next available level.

Additional criteria applicable to existing grant recipients applying for further support

This means:

- applicants who have previously completed a 'Try' grant and would like to apply for 'Kickstart'; and
- applicants who have previously completed a 'Kickstart' grant and would like to apply for 'Grow'.

You may only apply for further funding once you have completed your previous grant. This means that:

- You have spent all the funds awarded to you
- You have completed all required reporting and monitoring processes concerning your previous grant
- You have written confirmation from your Relationship Manager that your previous grant has been closed.

We will prioritise applications for further support that – in addition to meeting the funding criteria - also:

- demonstrate strongest performance with their previous grant;
- present the strongest follow-up proposals which build on existing success and demonstrate the potential to go further and
- show the greatest need for further funding, together with a timetable and clear plans to spend any additional funds by 28 February 2025

Now that you've confirmed your eligibility, it's time to move on to the rest of the form.

Section Two: About You

This section is where you fill out your contact details. If you are applying as an individual, please provide your details.



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If you are applying on behalf of an existing social enterprise, please provide us with details of the lead contact for this application. The email address, contact number and postal address should be for the business, rather than the lead applicant's personal details.

If you have any accessibility requirements, please tick the box. We endeavour to make the assessment process as accessible as possible, so we need to know if you have any requirements.

Please let us know if you have engaged with one-to-one business advice through PNE to apply.

Please give further details if you are developing the idea with someone else. If you would like them to attend the assessment with you, we can accommodate this. However, please remember that you need to identify a primary point of contact in this section who will take responsibility for keeping in touch with us.

We also need to know if you have applied for a Boost Fund grant in any local authority other than Sunderland or South Tyneside and if so, which local authority this was. You can apply to another Boost Fund delivery partner in a different local authority area. However, this should be for new activity that is not being funded elsewhere.

Section Three: Your Idea

If you don't have a name for the proposed enterprise, that's fine – just put n/a.

If you have incorporated your social enterprise, please select its legal form. If you still need to incorporate the social enterprise, that's also fine, just leave it blank

If you have, please let us know the charity/company number if applicable. These numbers are on the Charity Commission (charities) or Companies House (companies) website.

You will need to enter the Business Standard Industrial Classification Code (BIC) that best describes your enterprise's main business activity. You can find a list of codes by [following this link](#).

As mentioned above, some enterprises provide social impact across various geographical areas. Please select ' England Wide ' if your beneficiary group is not restricted to Sunderland or South Tyneside.

If your enterprise is already up and running, please provide:

- The number of full-time equivalent employees (full time is defined as 37.5 hrs)
- The monthly number of volunteer hours (These should relate to volunteering that your social enterprise supports or enables and should be used for the social purpose your social enterprise has).
- Your latest annual turnover and profits (If you have a newly established enterprise and do not yet have a full year of trading, you can enter an estimated turnover or profit for the first full year).



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If your enterprise is not yet up and running, just leave the fields blank.

Overview

The overview of your idea / social enterprise should be brief and factual. You should cover the following points:

- What services/products will your enterprise offer?
- How your enterprise will generate an income.
- How your enterprise will provide social impact.

How will your idea meet local needs and improves pride in place and/or social connections in the local area?

- What is the issue that local people need solving?
- Why does this matter?
- How do you know there is this issue and that it is not already being addressed?
- What is the activity (e.g. service or product) that you will be undertaking to address this issue?
- How do you know that this is the best way of addressing this need?
- How do you know that there is a demand for this specific activity - i.e. that people will want it and be prepared to pay for it?
- How might this activity meet other, broader, needs such as improving pride in place, social connections and/or neighbourliness)?

You don't have to answer all the above, but we want to see that you have considered some of these points.

Please tell us about your plans to deliver your activities – what will you do and how will you do it?

- What are your plans for delivering this activity?
- What skills and resources do you need?
- How will you supply these?
- What relevant experience do you have?

Again, you don't need to cover everything, but the above may be helpful.

What are your plans to balance the cost of delivering this activity against the income you think it will generate? (max 250 words):

- What are your expenses? What are the direct costs for delivering the activity? What are the ongoing (overhead) costs?



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- How have you calculated them?
- What will be your income?
- How have you calculated that?
- How will you manage if you overspend and/ or do not achieve your income? What are your contingency sums?
- What are your main risks? And how will you manage them?

How does your enterprise demonstrate 'value for money'? (max 250 words):

- What is it that you would like to achieve through your proposal? This might include 'hard' outcomes (like employment opportunities) or 'soft' outcomes (e.g. providing comfort to isolated elders).
- Are there other things that you would like to achieve with your proposal - such as bringing a community together?
- Are these outcomes short-term and/ or long-term?
- How do these compare with the cost involved (primarily money but also time/ effort)? Why are the outcomes worth it for these costs?

How do you plan to capture what you have learned from delivering your activity? (max 250 words):

- What information will you record about your activity?
- How will you work out what impact or difference your activity is making to your beneficiaries and/or the wider community?
- Do you have plans to share what you learn?

Tell us about your plans to continue delivering your activities over the long term (i.e. once the grant has been spent) (max 250 words)

- How will you ensure that the benefits from this activity continue to be felt - if not grow?
- What are your long-term plans?
- How will you ensure that you improve at what you do?



Section Four: Budget

Here you need to itemise your funding request, ideally under spend categories. This request will form the basis of your grant if you are successful.

Eligible Costs

You can use a Boost Fund grant for various costs associated with starting your enterprise. While individual applications vary, typical costs at this stage include:

- **Staff salaries for new or existing members of your team.** If you want to add new roles to your organisation, we want to hear about how you plan to sustain these roles after the funding runs out.
- **Set up costs**, such as:
 - o Legal fees for setting up a legal entity. Choosing which type of legal entity is a complex question, and we recommend researching or getting professional advice before deciding.
 - o Website, including domain registration and website design.
 - o Branding, logo design and marketing materials/stationery.
 - o Insurance costs.
- **Project running costs, bills and overheads** – this could include:
 - o Rent for premises/office space. This cost should be a specific sum based on discussions with the landlord. You should also state how much this rent will cover, e.g. rent (3 months): £1500.
 - o Venue hire. If your enterprise delivers events or regular pop-up services, you can use the funding to cover venue hire.
 - o Utilities, including phones. As with rent, you should ideally estimate how many months the request will cover.
 - o Accountancy costs.
- **Equipment.** While we fund equipment for social enterprises, this will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and should not be the only item you request funding for. We will consider various costs under this category, provided you can demonstrate that the equipment is necessary to deliver your proposal. For example:
 - o IT equipment and software
 - o Project-specific equipment, e.g. catering appliances, sports equipment, uniforms, tools, safety gear
- **Improvements to the project's physical environment linked to enhancing service delivery** – including minor renovations, redecoration, furnishings, gardening/landscaping, and installation of accessibility measures.
- **Organisational development** – For example, training, recruitment of new staff or board members, or other costs associated with implementing practices, systems and



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techniques that help to improve your organisation and build foundations for sustainable growth.

We do not require that you include quotes when you apply; however, the more specific your costs are, the better.

Top up applications

You can apply for items in your previous budget related to ongoing costs– for example, further rent on-premises or replacement stock. However, you must demonstrate how this would help to continue good work and deliver more impact. We can't cover one-off items you claimed in your previous grant.

You can also apply for costs which will help you try something new, so long as you can show how it is relevant to the previous project, builds on what you learned, and that your activities still meet the funding criteria.

Ineligible Costs

There are various costs that this fund is not permitted to cover. The main ones are summarised below, but please see our FAQs for a complete list of ineligible costs.

- Retrospective costs. You cannot use Boost Fund funding to cover expenses you already incurred and paid.
- Business consultants/coaching. The programme already provides free business advice through our partner PNE. We strongly encourage you to access this advice before making an application. We will only fund external business coaching or advice if you demonstrate that your project requires specialist support not covered by PNE.
- Meeting/subsistence costs. These costs are hard to evidence as business-related. While venue hire is covered (see: Eligible Costs), other meeting costs, such as refreshments, cannot be covered.
- Livestock. We are unable to fund livestock of any type.

Other Sources

If you plan to use money from other sources (e.g. a grant from a different funder, savings or a loan) in addition to a Boost Fund grant, you should detail these sources in the space provided.

Section Five: Bank Details

Here you need to provide us with your bank details to ensure swift payment if you're successful.

Bank Account Name

This should be the account holder's name as shown on the bank statement, i.e., your name or that of the enterprise, not the bank/building society name.



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Account Number and Sort Code

These should be the same numbers as presented on your bank statement. Please note that the sort code should be a 6-digit number with no spaces or dashes.

Section Six: Equal Opportunities

We use equal opportunities information for statistical purposes and to help the government, which funds this programme, to understand who is being supported. Equal Opportunities data will not form part of your application assessment.

If there are any questions that you would prefer not to answer, please leave the field blank or choose Prefer not to say.

Section Seven: Submit

And you should now be ready to submit! The form will let you know if you need to include any required fields.

If you need help submitting your application, please email us at info@firstport.org.uk or call 0131 564 0331.

3. Questions for top up grants

This section is only relevant if you have already received a grant from the SE Boost Fund and would like to apply to the next available level.

You will complete sections one and two in the same way as your initial application. However, section three asks you to complete questions that are specifically relevant to the additional grant you are applying for.

Please talk us through your plans for a further grant and how this will allow you to make further progress with your social enterprise (max 250 words):

- Explain what you would do if your grant application was successful.
- Will you be making any major changes in how you deliver your activity?

Please explain how your new proposal continues to meet the fund's priority criteria (see pages 4 and 5), whether this is through continuing activities that you started with your previous grant, or through trying new activities. (max 500 words)



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- What went well with your previous grant, and how do you plan to continue that success with the help of more funding?
- Perhaps some things did not go so well! How will you learn from that experience and ensure that your idea meets the criteria more successfully this time?
- Will you focus on creating more impact through carrying on the same activities you started with your previous grant or trying something new?

Please tell us about how a further grant could improve your enterprise's ability to generate income or become more financially sustainable (max 250 words):

- How successful were you in generating income with the help of your previous grant?
- How much more do you think you can generate with the help of some extra funding?
- What difference would the funding make to your project's finances? Would it help bring down the cost of delivery, or allow you to expand and scale up? Or would it allow you to try something new that has the potential to transform your project's ability to support itself?
- How much do you need further support? How will you keep your project going if you are unsuccessful?

Please tell us how a further grant could improve your enterprise's ability to deliver social impact and benefit individuals, communities and/or the environment (max 250 words):

- How successful were you in creating social impact with your previous grant?
- How much more impact do you think you can create with the help of some additional funding?
- What difference would the funding make to your social impact? Would it allow you to reach more beneficiaries? Or would it allow you to make deeper and more lasting impact for the people you are already engaging with?

Once you have completed these questions, you will then complete the remaining sections in the same way as your initial application.

4. What Happens Next?

You will receive an email confirming that we have received your application. We will contact you within 2-4 weeks to arrange an assessment if your idea is eligible.

The assessment will take place over the phone or via Microsoft Teams if you are happy to do so. Teams is a video-conferencing tool, and we will provide you with a link before the meeting. To use Teams, you should have a webcam, microphone, and access to the internet – you don't need a computer to use it; a mobile phone will do.



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We carry out assessments because while written applications help get a sense of what you want to do, we are interested in talking to you directly about your idea, motivation, and plans. Assessments are an opportunity to ask specific questions and better understand your vision. They also help us make the process fairer for everyone. We want to support people with the skills, passion, and drive to make real change in their communities but find it difficult to express their ideas in writing for any reason.

If you have accessibility requirements that would make a phone or Teams call difficult, just let us know. We'll arrange something more suitable.

After an assessment, your application will go to our funding panel for a decision. We aim to get back to you within 12 weeks of the date you applied, though this may be longer during busy periods. If this is the case, we'll let you know.

If your application is unsuccessful, we will email you with panel feedback.

5. How we assess your application

Providing your application is eligible, we will score it against the fund's criteria:

- Meets local needs and improves pride in place and/or social connections in the area - by 'local', we mean that your application delivers the majority of its social or environmental benefit within one or both of the following local authority areas:
 - Sunderland
 - South Tyneside

Local means that we expect you to deliver at least 75% of your activities within one or both areas. If you are unsure about this, please get in touch with us.

- Demonstrates robust delivery plans and an understanding of project finances
- Demonstrates value for money
- Provides evidence of how you will learn from your proposed activities and demonstrate that you can sustain your activities over the long term (i.e. how your project will generate income to keep going once you have spent the grant money).

We give applications a HIGH/MEDIUM/LOW score across all criteria and the strongest applications are put forward to be considered for a grant at a funding panel.

Top-up grants

If you have previously completed a 'Try' grant and are being assessed for a 'Kickstart'; or have previously completed a 'Kickstart' grant and are being assessed for a 'Grow' grant, your application will again be scored against the general funding criteria, together with the additional criteria below:



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- Demonstrable strong performance with previous grant
- Presented a relevant follow-up proposal which builds on existing success and demonstrates potential to go further
- Demonstrable need for further funding together with clear plans to spend this by the end of the programme (28 February 2025)

We give applications a HIGH/MEDIUM/LOW score across all criteria and the strongest applications are put forward to be considered for a grant at a funding panel.

We expect high demand for this funding and to receive more eligible applications than we can award. Meeting the eligibility criteria does not guarantee that we will be able to support your idea.

At each level, the panels will be competitive and focus on distributing the available budget to applications that best fit the programme's criteria and priorities.

6. Frequently Asked Questions

Eligibility

Q: How do you define social enterprise?

We use the government definition: "a social enterprise is a business with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners"

Q: How do you define an early-stage enterprise?

An early-stage enterprise is assessed as being an organisation less than 5 years old and with a turnover of less than £250,000 in their last financial year.

Q: My enterprise will be trading across the whole of the UK. Is this eligible?

There are no geographical restrictions on trading. However, you must deliver most of the social impact (at least 75%) within one, or both, of the eligible local authority areas – Sunderland or South Tyneside. This means that most people who will benefit from the good work of your enterprise must live in Sunderland or South Tyneside. This can be hard to gauge if you intend to trade or operate outside your local authority area, so please contact us to discuss if you have any queries on this.

Q: My enterprise is a trading arm of an established charity/organisation. Is this eligible?

Yes, as long as it meets the criteria applicable to existing social enterprises, i.e. that it can demonstrate that it has been trading for 5 years or less, is incorporated and registered with Companies House in its own right and has its own bank account.



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Q: What is meant by 'direct' and 'indirect social impact', and which type can this fund support?

When a social enterprise carries out work or provides services itself for the good of its beneficiaries (this could be individuals, a community, or even the environment) we define this as 'direct social impact'. On the other hand, when a social enterprise provides services to other **organisations**, who then go on to do the work with beneficiaries, this would be defined as 'indirect social impact'.

For example: an enterprise providing counselling services to a vulnerable group would be seen as direct social impact; an enterprise providing counselling training to a charity who then provides this counselling to their beneficiaries would be seen as indirect social impact.

Both types of social impact are eligible for this fund.

Q: What type of enterprise typically requires premises to start trading?

Most bricks-and-mortar retail enterprises, community cafés, or any community-focused enterprise which requires a permanent base of operations as part of their commercial/social strategy.

Q: I have identified a suitable property, but I haven't approached the owner yet. Does this count as an agreement in principle?

No. You must be able to confirm that the property is available, and that the landlord/agency has agreed in principle to lease the property to you and provide us with details of any costs associated with leasing the property (deposit, rent etc.).

Costs

Q: I have already set up the social enterprise and all I need is equipment. Will this be eligible?

Some social enterprises have already sourced start-up funds from elsewhere (which should be detailed in the 'Other Sources' space) but have a larger initial funding requirement. We will assess this on a case-by-case basis.

Q: If I submit a budget and need to change it later, is that possible?

We understand that requirements may change between the submission of the application and the assessment, so there will be opportunities to amend your budget later.

Q. Which costs can't be covered by the fund?

Please see below for a full list of ineligible costs:

- Payment that supports lobbying or activity intended to influence or attempt to influence Parliament, Government or political parties, or attempting to influence the



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awarding or renewal of contracts and grants, or attempting to influence legislative or regulatory action

- Using grant funding to petition for additional funding
- Input VAT reclaimable by You from HMRC
- Payments for activities of a political or exclusively religious nature
- Goods or services that You have a statutory duty to provide
- Payments reimbursed or to be reimbursed by other public or private sector grants
- Contributions in kind (i.e. a contribution in goods or services, as opposed to money);
- Depreciation, amortisation, or impairment of fixed assets owned by You
- The acquisition or improvement of Fixed Assets (with “Fixed Asset” defined as an asset that would be capitalised under DCMS’s own capitalisation policy, as set out in DCMS’s annual accounts) by You (unless the grant is explicitly for capital use – this will be stipulated in the Grant Offer Letter)
- Interest payments (including service charge payments for finance leases)
- Gifts to individuals other than promotional items with a value of no more than £25 a year to any one individual
- Entertaining (entertaining for this purpose means anything that would be a taxable benefit to the person being entertained, according to current UK tax regulations)
- Statutory fines, criminal fines or penalties
- Liabilities incurred before the issue of this funding agreement unless agreed in writing by Us
- Use in respect of costs reimbursed or to be reimbursed by funding from any other source
- Used to purchase buildings or land. There may be cases, for example, around community assets, where it is possible that a small amount of funding could be committed to costs related to capital projects, such as surveys and design options, where this helps to meet the Fund’s objectives. This should be notified to DCMS and agreed on a case-by-case basis.

If you have any questions about eligibility or costs that have not been covered in this section, please contact us via email at info@firstport.org.uk or phone on 0131 564 0331.