The Community **Connections** Fund

Guidance for applicants

Lambeth

Contents

About the Fund

The Community Connections Fund encourages and supports community-led initiatives that address key priorities as identified by local people, ensuring Lambeth is a place of opportunity where everyone can feel safe and thrive.

The Community Connections Fund works to support local groups, projects, and good causes in four neighbourhood areas: **Waterloo** (Waterloo & South Bank), **North Lambeth** (Kennington, Oval, Vauxhall), **Stockwell** (Myatt's Fields, Stockwell East, Stockwell West & Larkhall), **Brixton** (Brixton Acre Lane, Brixton North, Brixton Rush Common, Brixton Windrush, Herne Hill & Loughborough Junction). To find which ward your project is located in please visit the Community Connections Fund website.

This £4million fund has been raised through developers' payments into the Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) and will be spent over multiple funding rounds. NCIL funds projects which address the impact of new development and ensure local people benefit from sustainable growth in the borough.

Fund Objectives

The Community Connections Fund has three key objectives. To secure funding, projects should meet ALL three key objectives listed below.

1 To support Lambeth communities by developing physical and social infrastructure that builds community resilience, strengthens local sense of place and has a lasting impact. Infrastructure can be physical projects, such as community space, shared outdoor space and play space, and non-physical projects like training and skills sharing, health and wellbeing, community safety, and cultural programmes. Projects should respond to local people's aspirations and needs and increase people's sense of connection, belonging and power within their communities and neighbourhoods. When evaluating bids, we will consider how proposals link to existing infrastructure and plans for strategic investment.

2 To support projects which involve and empower people to improve their local communities.

Projects should be able to clearly demonstrate how they are shaped by local peoples' voices. The Fund will support projects where local people are active participants and leaders.

3 To support projects which make connections and develop partnerships.

Projects should harness the collective power and expertise of the community, working with existing partnerships and developing new ones. This could involve developing joint project proposals, sharing resources and knowledge, or co-designing initiatives which strengthen local networks and bring people and groups together.

Lambeth 2030

The fund will support projects which also respond to the collective vision and ambitions set out in the new Lambeth Borough Plan – **Lambeth 2030: Our Future, Our Lambeth**.

Informed by hundreds of conversations, workshops, and our Lambeth survey, Lambeth 2030 is a Borough Plan for everyone. It sets out how we will transform and reshape our neighbourhoods and equip our communities so that the Lambeth we see in 2030 is one that is healthier, safer, sustainable, and active in tearing down deep-rooted inequalities. It will bind us to work together, representing the beginning of our journey and collective effort to shape the future of Lambeth.

Based on feedback and what we know about the challenges our borough faces, **Lambeth 2030 sets three bold ambitions:**

1 Making Lambeth neighbourhoods fit for the future By 2030, Lambeth will be a clean, vibrant and climate resilient borough where people can lead healthier, happier lives.

2 Making Lambeth one of the safest boroughs in London By 2030, Lambeth will be one of the safest boroughs in London, where everyone feels safe and secure – in all places.

3 Making Lambeth a place we can all call home By 2030, Lambeth will be a lifelong borough, with the best conditions to grow up and age well, where everyone can contribute to an inclusive economy, and have a place to call home.

All of these are inextricably linked by the **Lambeth Golden Thread** – a new commitment to make Lambeth a borough of equity and justice. By 2030, Lambeth will be a fair and equitable borough, which seeks and delivers justice through all that we do.
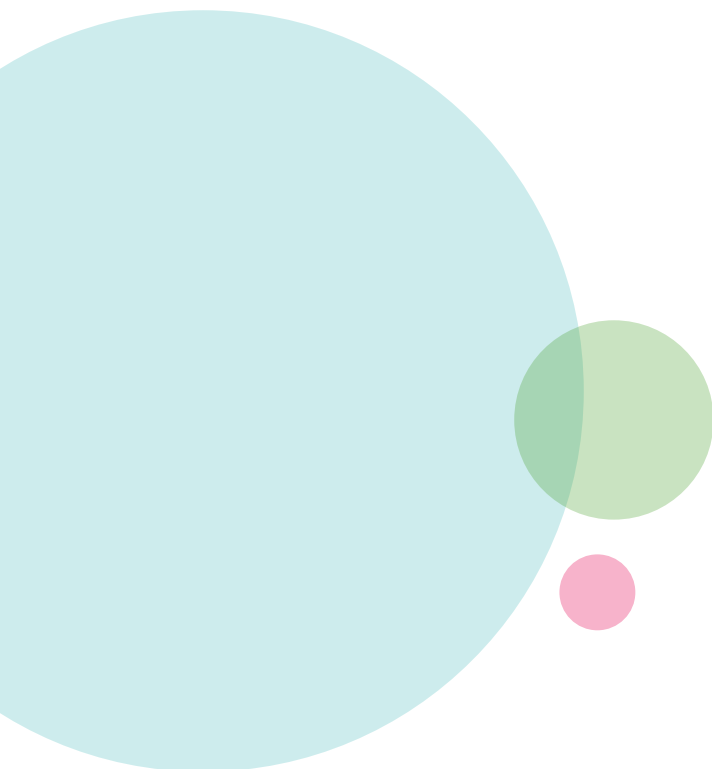
There are a wide range of projects that respond to the Lambeth 2030 ambitions, with further guidance on what these projects could involve detailed as a guide below. Please note this is only intended as a guide rather than an exhaustive list.

## 1 Neighbourhoods Fit for the Future

Climate Resilience
Projects could support Lambeth's ambition to address the challenges of climate change, environmental conservation, and sustainable development as outlined in the Climate Action Plan. This could involve initiatives focused on renewable energy, waste management, biodiversity conservation, sustainable agriculture, increasing access to green spaces or projects that raise awareness and promote sustainable practices within communities. It could also draw on Lambeth's Kerbside Strategy which sets out Lambeth's vision to transform 25% of the borough's kerbside into places for people. We welcome innovative approaches to using Lambeth's new public spaces and improving our streets and neighbourhoods.

Our streets and neighbourhoods
Projects could support Lambeth's initiative in becoming a zero-waste borough as outlined in the Climate Action Plan and making our streets attractive and welcoming. This could involve initiatives or projects that promote and/or utilise the re-use of material and food waste or delivering campaigns and educational programmes to communities on best practice.

Healthy Active Lives
Projects could focus on physical and mental health, aiming to improve the well-being and overall health outcomes of individuals and communities. This could involve initiatives that promote healthy lifestyles, mental health awareness and support, access to healthcare services, or programs that address specific health issues prevalent in the community. We welcome projects that address specific health disparities and inequalities faced by certain communities, and projects providing residents with better and higher quality health and leisure services and creating environments that promote active travel, physical activity and healthy choices. This could involve initiatives that increase access to services for certain communities, delivering and developing health and physical activity services or creating spaces for communities to learn and connect around their health.
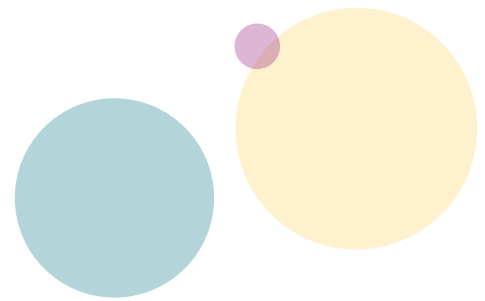
2 One of the Safest Boroughs in London

Violence affecting young people, violence against women and girls and hate crime, discrimination and anti-social behaviour have been identified as areas for action with the ambition to make Lambeth one of the safest boroughs in London by 2030. Projects which help to create safer environments and increased feelings of safety will be welcomed, especially place-based and community-led initiatives to address specific safety concerns.

3 A Place We Can All Call Home

Making Lambeth the best place to grow up
It is Lambeth's ambition to become an accredited UNICEF Child Friendly borough through its various programmes and initiatives, with a particular focus on safety, place and services. Projects could aim to improve the lives of children and young people in the borough regardless of their background, culture, ability or anything else. This could include initiatives that provide children and young people with opportunities to grow, learn, explore and have fun, and are protected from discrimination and harm. In this context projects should put children's rights and voices at the heart of project development and delivery and should be enhancing and supporting the ambitions of Lambeth's existing services.

Making Lambeth the best place to age well
Projects which listen to and work with older residents to develop shared priorities for the future, equipping older residents with the support they need to continue to call Lambeth home will be welcomed. This may include projects which create social and built environments that promote healthy and active later lives for all residents supporting Lambeth's ambitions in becoming an Age-Friendly borough.

Inclusive economic development and opportunity
Lambeth's ambition is of a dynamic, strong, equitable local economy which provides homes, jobs, vibrant neighbourhoods and opportunities for local people to thrive irrespective of their starting point in life. Projects could support cultural institutions, local businesses and local people to build and maintain a thriving economy making Lambeth an attractive destination to visit, live and work. This could include projects or initiatives that provides education and skills training, lifelong learning opportunities, specialist support for residents who need it or partnering with local businesses to identify paid, vocational and volunteer opportunities for residents.

Quality housing for local people
Lambeth's ambition is to ensure everyone has access to a safe and secure home, which is affordable and sustainable, and in particular working in partnership across the borough to tackle homelessness. The fund would welcome projects which help Lambeth residents to create a sense of belonging and community within their neighbourhoods or provides specialist support to homeless residents.

A borough of sanctuary

Projects which support refugees, migrants and all those seeking sanctuary, supporting them through loss and trauma and working with them to rebuild their lives, will be welcomed. This could include initiatives which improve equity of access to support for all sanctuary-seekers and raise the voices of people with lived-experience.

The Lambeth Golden Thread – A Borough of Equity and Justice

By 2030, Lambeth will be a fair and equitable borough, which seeks and delivers justice through all that we do.

The fund is looking for projects which deliver what matters most to people with protected characteristics and Lambeth's diverse communities, and not only celebrate the richness of diversity across Lambeth – but honour our heritage, so that this can be seen in the way that projects are delivered and ultimately in the fabric and structures of our borough. The fund will support projects which show a commitment to all our communities, and to working together to tackle inequality at the root cause.
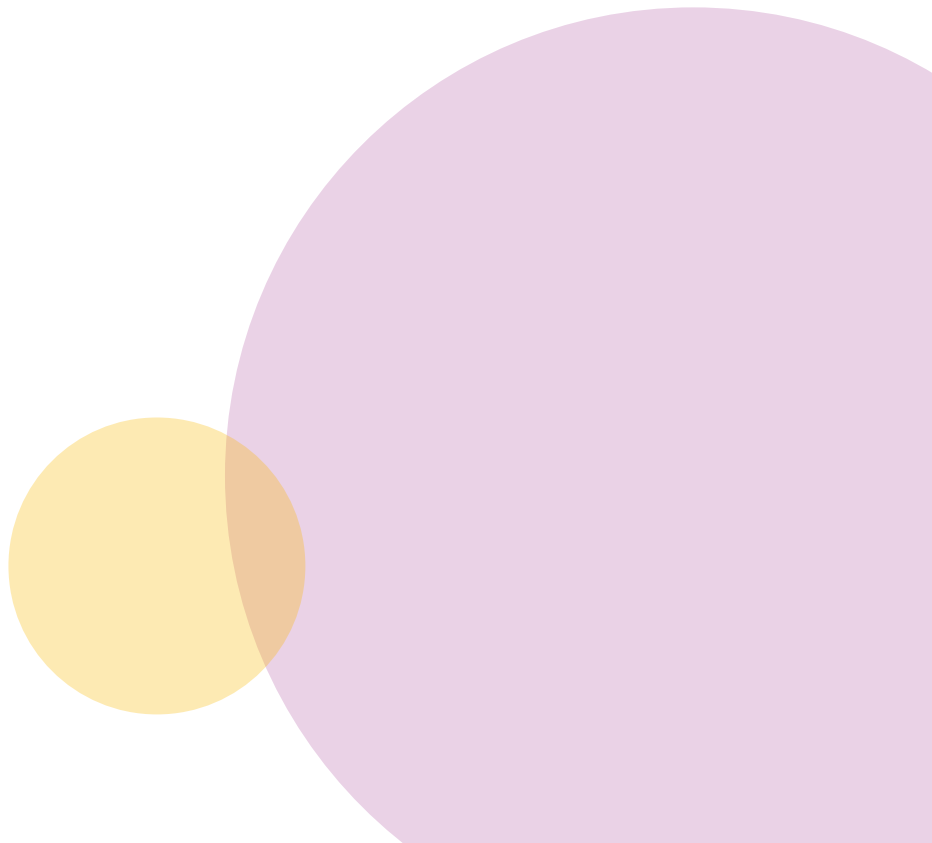
Round Two Structure and Process

This section outlines the types of grant available for applicants, the process for applying, and support available.

Types of Grants

In addition to the Project Grants which were available in Round One, we are introducing Development Grants to support groups and/or individuals who may have a less developed idea or early-stage partnership and are looking to develop this idea and build the capacity of their team to deliver.

Project Grants – Up to £200,000
Funding for specific projects or initiatives that have defined goals, timelines, and expected outcomes.

You can apply for Project Grants of three different sizes:
• Small: £10,000 - £25,000
• Medium: £25,000 - £100,000
• Large: £100,000 - £200,000.

These grants can support:
• Physical projects, such as community space or public realm projects.
• Non-physical projects such as launching a new program, organising an event conducting research, or implementing a community-based project.
• The funds are allocated to cover project-related expenses, including staffing, materials, equipment, and other necessary resources.

The fund is committed to ensuring that any organisation or partnership applying for funding has the capacity to successfully deliver the project as requested. To this end, due diligence will be conducted to ensure confidence in the capabilities of the applicant. As a general guideline, organisations are encouraged to apply for a grant value of up to 50% of their previous year's turnover. For partnership applications, we will also consider the last year's turnover of partners.

Development Grants – Up to £10,000
Grants which support the capacity, infrastructure, and leadership capabilities of organisations, partnerships, groups and individuals, and/or support them to develop project proposals or deliver small projects.

These grants can support:
• Project Development: Support to develop and pilot innovative projects, programs, and initiatives.
• Project delivery: delivery of small projects below the minimum project grant threshold by individuals or un-constituted groups which build the capacity and leadership capabilities of those involved.
• Capacity Building: Support to strengthen their internal operations and enhance their ability to deliver impactful projects.
• Partnership Support: Work which encourages connections, peer-to-peer support, networking events, and spaces for collaboration and partnership working.

Submission Guidance

Applicants should submit only one application as lead applicant, and should choose to submit either a Development Grant or a Project Grant application, as lead applicant. Organisations are permitted to act as partners on additional applications provided that they are not the lead applicant.

Decision-making Process

Stage	Detail
Single Application Form	Applicants will submit a single application form for a decision to be made
Initial Decision & Supplementary Information and Due Diligence	The Council will respond to applicants with their initial decision following an evaluation period. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified, and strong applications may have to supply additional information for due diligence checks and to respond to any clarification queries from evaluators. In some cases, applicants may not be offered the full project grant that they had applied for or may be offered the opportunity for a development grant instead.
Grant Agreement Signing	Grant Agreements will be completed following successful completion of checks and confirmation of final portfolio of projects for each neighbourhood.

Support with your Application

We will be providing support to applicants throughout the process. To find out more about this support please visit
lambeth.gov.uk/community-connections-fund

Contact the Community Connections team to invite us to local events or to discuss how we can support you with your application. You can also find the application questions and prompts within this guidance document.

If you need any accessibility support to apply for this programme or need documents in alternative formats, please contact the Community Connections team. We're happy to talk about other ways for you to tell us about your project. Contact details can be found in the Get in Touch section of this guidance document.

Project Timelines

We are looking to fund projects which can be completed within two years of receiving grant funding. Successful projects will enter into a grant agreement with Lambeth Council and grant funding must begin being spent within six months of the grant agreement for revenue funding, and one year for capital projects.

Eligibility and Partnerships

This section outlines who is eligible to apply for the fund, including how individuals and unconstituted groups can apply and what we cannot support.

Who can apply?

Organisations

Any organisation based in Lambeth or with a track record of delivery in Lambeth can apply to the Community Connections Fund. Your proposed project must be located within the four NCIL neighbourhood areas (Brixton, North Lambeth, Stockwell and Waterloo).

Examples of organisations who could apply include:
- Charity
- Voluntary Organisation
- Business
- Community Group
- Residents Group
- Social Enterprises/Community Interest Companies.

Partnerships

The Community Connections Fund encourages applications from organisations working in partnership. Partnership/Collaboration applications should be submitted by one of the collaborating organisations, the Lead Organisation. The Lead Organisation should meet the geographical criteria for organisations set out previously. We will expect to sign a grant agreement with the Lead Organisation who will be ultimately responsible for spending the grant funding according to the terms of the grant agreement. However, applicants should contact us if they would like to discuss an alternative arrangement.

Individuals and Unregistered Groups

If you are an individual or unconstituted group, but you have a great idea for a community project, you can apply for a Development or Project Grant by working with a Nurture Organisation, who will submit the application and sign the grant agreement on your behalf.
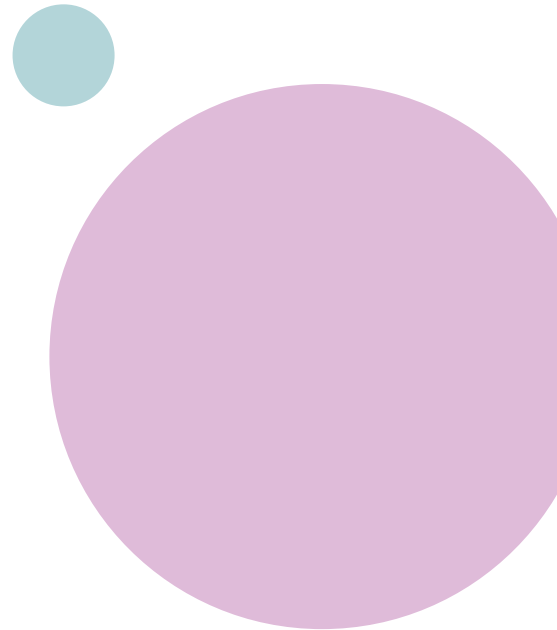
Role of Nurture Organisations

The Nurture Organisation will receive the grant on behalf of an individual or unconstituted group and provide support to individuals/groups in managing the project's delivery and expenditure to ensure the successful delivery of the project. Nurture Organisations should meet the Community Connections Fund eligibility criteria.

The Nurture Organisation should offer additional support in areas such as safeguarding, insurance, liability, and monitoring.They help individuals/groups navigate these aspects to ensure compliance and mitigate any potential risks or issues that may arise during the project. Up to 15% of Grant Budget can be allocated towards management fees for the Nurture Organisation.

To ensure a smooth working relationship, Nurture Organisation and the individual/group are encouraged to establish a formal agreement outlining their respective roles and responsibilities. Regular meetings should be planned for updates on the project's progress, and expenditure monitoring meetings should be scheduled to review financial matters and adhere to a payment schedule.

What we cannot support through this fund

- Activities which support religious or political purposes
- Activities that benefit individuals, rather than the wider community
- Business investments
- Items that Lambeth council have a budget for and are statutory
- Projects which have no evidence of community support
- Things you have spent money on in the past and are looking to claim now
- Activities that make profits for private gain
- Organisations which already have a Community Connections Fund Grant unless offering support as a partner on an application or as a Nurture Organisation.

Application Assessment

This section outlines the evaluation process and criteria.

Evaluators

Officers from a range of council departments with experience and expertise relevant to the project and to the neighbourhood area will work to support the assessment and due diligence process. Ward members will be invited to comment on proposals within their areas.

Evaluation Criteria

In the first instance all applicants must be deemed eligible for the fund as outlined in the Eligibility and Partnerships Section. Applications will then be assessed by evaluators holistically according to the following considerations.

Project Grants

Criteria	Detail
Responding to the objectives	Evaluators will consider the applications on their own terms, judging the strength of the responses to the questions and how far the applications respond to the objectives.
Alignment with strategic context	Evaluators will consider how the proposal aligns with the Council's strategic priorities as outlined by the Borough Plan ambitions. They will also consider how the project will complement existing and/or future Council work.
Collective impact	Evaluators will consider the overall impact of the portfolio of projects in each neighbourhood area and will consider how to maximise the overall impact through selection of the range of projects and their relation to each other.
Deliverability	Evaluators will consider the project's ability to effectively execute its planned activities, achieve stated objectives, and produce tangible outcomes within the specified timeframes and budgets. Evaluators will also consider the experience of the organisation(s) and financial records.
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)	Evaluators will assess how the proposal integrates EDI by considering the involvement of diverse stakeholders, inclusive community engagement strategies, and efforts to raise awareness of EDI. They will also consider how the project considers protected characteristics, as well as our local protected characteristics socio-economic status, health, language, and care experience.

Development Grants

Applications will be assessed holistically according to the below considerations.

Criteria	Detail
Responding to the objectives	Evaluators will consider the overall strength and cohesion of the proposal, and how the proposal objectives fit with the Community Connections Fund objectives. In particular, they will consider how far the proposal meets the Development Grant aims relating to Project Development, Project Delivery, Capacity Building Support or Partnership Support.
Community Impact	Evaluators will consider the impact that the Development Grant will have on the community as well as on the organisations or individuals and partnerships delivering it.
Collective Impact	Evaluators will consider the overall impact of the portfolio of project and development grant proposals in each neighbourhood area and will consider how to maximise the overall impact through selection of the range of projects and their relation to each other.
Deliverability	Evaluators will consider the team's ability to effectively execute its planned activities, achieve stated objectives, and produce tangible outcomes within the specified timeframes and budgets. Evaluators will also consider the experience of the organisation(s) and financial records.
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)	Evaluators will assess how the proposal integrates EDI by considering the involvement of diverse stakeholders, inclusive community engagement strategies, and efforts to raise awareness of EDI. They will also consider how the project considers protected characteristics, as well as our local protected characteristics socio-economic status, health, language, and care experience.

Evaluators will be looking for clear responses and encourage the use of bullet points for clarity. Evaluators will be encouraged to focus on the the substance of what the proposal will achieve rather than the quality of written communication.

Feedback

Given the volume of applications anticipated, applicants will not receive individual feedback on their submissions. However, the council will publish general feedback and consider how it can offer support to groups of unsuccessful applicants to help them secure funding or opportunities in future.

Application Questions

The table below shows the Community Connections Fund application questions and prompts.

Project Grant questions

Question	Prompts
Tell us about the skills and experience that your organisation or group of organisations has that will contribute to the project's success.	In your response please include: • activities you have undertaken in the neighbourhood area in the last 3 years • example(s) of your experience in delivering similar projects • key skills or experience each organisation will contribute to the project if applying as more than one organisation.
Please describe your project idea.	We want to understand: • the main aim of your project • the activities you will undertake, including key milestones • intended outputs/achievements of your project.
How are local people shaping your project?	We want to understand: • who has been involved in shaping the projects so far • how the project responds to people's needs and aspirations • how the project builds on people's skills, strengths or interests • how the project will involve and empower local people throughout its duration.
How will your project strengthen existing partnerships or networks, and make new ones?	We want to understand: • how existing partnerships or collaborations will support the project and its goals • how the project will develop new partnerships, collaboration or networks • how the project complements or links to other local initiatives.
How will your project have a lasting impact in your community and your neighbourhood?	We want to understand: • the impact you aim to achieve beyond the project's initial implementation • the important actions or activities necessary for sustaining impact beyond the initial implementation • any strategies for financial sustainability and maintenance.
How does your organisation and project work to support Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)?	• Please outline any measures taken to support and involve diverse voices in your project • How will you engage with community members from diverse backgrounds throughout the project? • How does your project promote awareness and understanding of issues related to EDI among participants and the broader community?

Development Grant Questions

Question

Tell us about the skills and experience that your organisation or group of organisations has that will contribute to the project's success.

Why is the Development Grant needed?

Please describe your top three objectives.

How do your organisation and proposal work to support Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)?

Please outline how you would spend the Development Grant to achieve your objectives?

How will the Development Grant benefit your local community?

Future Funding Rounds

If you are not ready to apply for a Project Grant or a Development Grant in this Round, we anticipate that further funding will be released in Future Rounds.

The team are available to discuss your ideas about projects and how we can support you to be in a position to apply for funding in future. Likewise, if you feel that the current approach does not enable you to apply, we encourage you to get in touch so that we can improve the inclusivity and accessibility of the approach in future funding rounds.

Get in Touch

If you have any queries about the process, please email us at **communityconnections@lambeth.gov.uk** or visit **www.lambeth.gov.uk/community-connections-fund**

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: I am not based within an NCIL Neighbourhood, am I able to apply to the Community Connections Fund?
A: Any group or organisation based in Lambeth or with a track record of delivery in Lambeth can apply to the Community Connections Fund. Your experience can be anywhere in the borough, but your proposed project must be located and delivered within the four NCIL neighbourhood areas.

Q: Can I apply for funding if my project is based in Lambeth but may benefit residents outside of Lambeth?
A: Yes, however your project should work primarily to support/benefit Lambeth residents.

Q: Are individuals and unconsituted groups able to apply to the Community Connections Fund?
A: Yes, however we cannot distribute the funding directly to individuals so you will need to partner with a Nurture Organisation, to submit your application. Please see the section on Nurture Organisations for more information

Q: Are successful applicants from Round One able to apply for Round Two?
A: Organisations who have received funding in Round One will not receive funding this round as lead applicant. Round One grant holders are able to offer support as a partner on an application or as Nurture Organisation.

Q: I was unsuccessful in Round One can I apply for the same project?
A: Yes, and would also encourage you to look through the guidance document to ensure your project aligns with the objectives and the Lambeth 2030 Borough Plan aims. We'd also encourage you to look at whether applying for a Development Grant is also an option.

Q: How much can I apply for?
A: The fund can support Project Grants: up to £200,000 and Development Grants up to £10,0000. Due diligence will be conducted to ensure confidence in the capabilities of the applicant. As a general guideline, organisations are encouraged to apply for a grant value of up to 50% of their previous year's turnover.

Q: Does my project need to have secured match funding to apply for a Community Connections Fund Grant?
A: Match funding is desirable but not essential.

Q: Can I apply for funding for an already existing project that has already started?
A: You could apply for funding for future phases of an existing project, especially where additional funding will expand the reach or impact of an existing project and add value. We will not fund any activity that has already been delivered retrospectively.

Q: Can I apply for funding for someone's salary?
A: Yes, the funds are allocated to cover project-related expenses, including staffing, materials, equipment, and other necessary resources.

Q: Can I apply for funding if I am a religious organisation or group?
A: Yes, however as outlined in 'What we cannot support' in the Eligibility and Partnerships section we will not fund activities which support religious or political purposes.

Q: How much funding will be awarded in Round Two?
A: The Council expects to award up to £1 million in Round Two. The exact envelope will depend on the quality of applications and the number of applications selected, taking into consideration capacity for monitoring and project support.