

**Nottingham City Council**

**UK Shared Prosperity Fund**

Digital Capital Grant

2024-2025

Applicant Guidance Notes



1. **Introduction**

This guidance is intended to provide information to potential applicants to the Nottingham City Council Digital Capital Grant.

The grant aims to support organisations to exploit their existing offer or introduce new systems, software or other physical/intellectual items to grow their organisation and the services on offer, improve performance raise productivity and increase community engagement.

Funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)), the grant operates over a one stage application process by the submission of a full application. The grant will remain open to applications until all funding has been committed. All applications will be marked on a first come first served basis.

1. **Background**

The Digital Capital Grant forms part of Nottingham City Council’s support for local organisations, which aims to help them improve the digital services on offer within their organisation whilst supporting members of the community in accessing and completing a qualification. The Grant allows Nottingham City Council to offer direct support to organisations to achieve their aspirations for growth.

1. **Grant Amount and Match Funding**

The minimum grant available is £10,000.

The maximum grant available is £15,000.

There is no match funding required for the Digital Capital Grant.

You will be asked for detailed quotations/ costings during the applications process and if successful you will instructed to go ahead and make any purchases outlined in your application.

Your organisation will be able to send in an invoice (following the purchasing of goods) for the agreed grant amount along with the evidence of spend.

However, if your organisation does not have the necessary funds in the bank to make the outlined purchases, Nottingham City Council can release your grant in advance.

To receive your grant payment in advance of purchase, you will need to provide evidence of your current financials and a detailed reason as to why you are not able to make the purchases before you receive the grant.

Nottingham City Council will require one of the following documents to support your explanation:

Your Organisation’s most recent Bank Statement (Screen shot will be accepted)

Copy of your Organisation’s latest management accounts

Nottingham City Council will use the explanation provided (supported by the financial evidence) and the responses to the following questions in Section 5 of the application form to inform its decision on whether your grant can and will be paid in advance.

Does your organisation have an existing contractual relationship with NCC?

Does your organisation have a previous contractual relationship with NCC with a track record of achieving agreed targets?

Your organisation would need to agree to repay any grant received if the equipment included in the application is not purchased or used as agreed.

Evidence of spend will be asked for as part of your quarterly reporting.

All grants are made at the discretion of Nottingham City Council and are subject to availability.

1. **Eligible Projects**

The Digital Capital Grant aims to support projects that deliver some, or all, of the following

outcomes and Outputs:

**Outputs**

* Number of people supported to engage in life skills
* Number of people supported to gain a qualification

**Outcomes**

* People gaining a qualification

The table below outlines examples of eligible projects and expenditure.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Project Outcomes & Outputs:** | **Eligible project expenditure:** | **Project Examples (not an exhaustive list):** |
| **Number of people supported to engage in life skills**  Your Digital Capital Project should increase engagement in life skills support, which is additional support which improves confidence, resilience, or motivation around the process of job searching and may include basic skills (English, Maths), digital skills, communication skills, presentation skills, activities which reduce social isolation or encourage appropriate employment related behaviours. | • New and emerging ICT products resulting in improved services and additional services being delivered within the community | * Computers/Laptops – Note: we will not be looking to support replacement of general office equipment or equipment used by staff working for your Organisation * Implementing new ICT products or services * Investing in new software that improves the services on offer to your service users increasing efficiency and diversifying your project range * Licences to support digital projects * Servers * ICT network infrastructure, including new or improved WIFI |
| **Number of people supported to gain a qualification**  Number of people who have completed a course or gained a qualification following support. |  |  |
| **People gaining a qualification**  Number of people who have received support to gain a qualification or completed a course following that support. |  |  |

**5. General Eligibility Criteria**

Nottingham City Council have identified that for some smaller grassroots organisations reaching a capital spend of £10,000 might be harder to do. With this in mind we will accept a single application from a partnership of organisation made up of no more than 2 organisations. Your application should have a lead organisation who will take responsibility for managing the funds and reporting the evidence back to NCC.

Grants are not available for items or services which would be considered part of normal organisation operations e.g. ongoing maintenance or repair (See also section 6.)

To be eligible to receive a grant your organisation **must**:

* Be located within, or deliver your services within the administrative area covered by Nottingham City Council
* Be a Community Interest Company (CIC), Company Limited by Guarantee, Social Enterprise, Registered charity, Public body which delivers or hosts community projects or a constituted body, **Not** a private company or business
* Have the relevant permissions required from your landlord (this includes all Nottingham City Council Owed buildings) before your application is submitted (if written permissions are not presented with your application submission, your application will not be reviewed and scored)

1. **Procurement**

All supplier quotes must clearly specify if VAT is applicable, and state price including and excluding VAT.

If your chosen supplier is not VAT registered, we will require an email verification from them to confirm this.

You will need to detail **all** proposed purchases in Appendix 2 – Supplier details; of the application form.

You **must**:

* Not have started purchasing the equipment for which grant funding is sought. Any purchases initiated prior to a grant award will not be eligible for funding
* Have an organisation bank account
* Have all the necessary permissions, licences and insurances to operate your organisation
* Satisfy that the proposals are viable, offer value for money, are realistic and deliverable

You **agree** to:

* Give consent to Nottingham City Council to involve your organisation in publicity for the grant scheme, e.g. press releases, case studies and photographs (subject to commercial sensitivity).
* Partake in periodically agreed monitoring after the grant payment, which will help us to assess the success of the overall UKSPF programme

1. **Ineligible Project Costs**

There is no definitive guidance on which costs are ineligible. However, the following cannot be supported by grants:

* Reimbursement of goods / services already purchased prior to the date of a grant offer letter
* Repayment of existing loans or debts
* Recurring revenue costs (including: salaries, pensions, stock, rent, utility charges, service charges subscriptions, insurance, tax, recruitment fees, website hosting etc.)
* Line rental and on-going maintenance costs associated with implementing a superfast broadband product
* Repairs and maintenance to existing ICT equipment
* Accredited training or the development or implementation of accredited training materials
* Financial charges, such as bank charges and interest
* Enterprises in difficulty
* Enterprises subject to an outstanding order for the recovery of illegal State Aid
* Activities that may bring Nottingham City Council into disrepute
* Costs associated with gaining statutory permissions or consents
* Delivery charges
* This list is not exhaustive and specific items can be checked for eligibility by the grants officer from the Nottingham City Council’s UKSPF team.

1. **UK subsidy control regime**

This grant scheme will be administered under Minimal Financial Assistance rules. – you’re allowed up to £315,000 in Minimal Financial Assistance over any rolling period of 3 financial years. Information on the scheme can be found at Gov.UK Subsidy Control Website.

Any aid awarded to you under the Digital Capital Grant will have to be declared if you apply, or have applied, for any other public funding. Therefore, if successful, the offer letter must be retained and shown to any other public body to which you apply for funding for the three years following the offer.

False declarations will lead to the recovery of the value of the assistance provided plus interest.

Note that where an organisation is part of a group, the £315,000 limit applies to the group as a whole for public sector support within the United Kingdom.

1. **Geographical Areas Covered**

Applications will **ONLY** be considered from organisations located within the City of Nottingham

1. **Timeframe**

The Digital Capital Grant will remain open to applications until all funding has been committed.

Projects awarded funding will be required to claim their grant award by the date or timeframe stated within the Grant Offer Letter and Grant/ Agreement.

However, all projects funded through the Scheme **must be** fully completed and all grant funding **claimed** by applicants by 31 October 2024.

1. **Application Process**

**Step 1 – Full Application**

If your organisation and project is eligible for support through the Digital Capital Grant, you should send in your full application form, which can be found using the following link:

<https://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/information-for-business/business-information-and-support/procurement/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-ukspf/>

Alongside the Application Form you must submit your supplier quotes, up to date financial accounts or bank statements as outlined in the eligibility listing

**Step 2 – Project Appraisal**

On receipt of the completed Full Application and supporting documentation, Nottingham City Council will conduct due diligence and compliance checks on the application.

Any issues or queries including requests for missing / additional information will be raised with you.

Applications passing the due diligence check will undergo a quality appraisal and will be assessed against the following:

* How the grant will hit the outputs and outcomes stated in the guidance
* How the grant will improve your organisations reach within your community
* How the grant will improve digital services for your service users
* How the grant will enable your organisation to access new markets not currently accessible to you and will enable you to offer new products or services that add significant value to the current offering
* Value for money in:
  + New products
  + Digital infrastructure
  + Digital skills
* Deliverability in proposed timescales / milestones, including contingency arrangements and the capacity of the organisation to manage and monitor the work.

All grant applications will then be considered by a Grant Panel and the applicant informed of the outcome in writing. The decision of the Panel on all Full Applications for funding is final and there is no process of appeal.

**Step 3 - Grant Offer**

If the application is successful, you will be notified in writing in the form of a Grant Offer Letter and a Grant Agreement. Any award will be made based on the terms and conditions outlined within the Grant Offer Letter and Grant Agreement.

**NB You must not enter into any financial or contractual arrangement with any supplier prior to the project being approved, and not before the date that the Grant Agreement is signed by Nottingham City Council. To be clear, any expenditure prior to the date that the Grant Agreement is signed, dated and returned cannot be claimed.**

Nottingham City Council reserves the right to withhold, vary or reclaim funding if any information supplied through the application and approval process proves to be inaccurate, misleading or incomplete.

**Step 4 - Payment of Grant**

Successful applicants will be issued a grant agreement. Once this has been countersigned, applicants will need to submit an invoice for the agreed amount.

Further details of the invoicing and payment processes will be included in the grant agreement.

1. **Commercial Confidentiality**

It is generally presumed that the information provided at all stages of the process is sensitive or confidential and will be treated as such. However, when signing the application, you agree to us sharing the details of your application with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities who are the grant scheme’s funder.

1. **Help and Support**

If you would like to discuss the general eligibility of your proposal, prior to submitting an application, please contact the Nottingham City Council UKSPF Team at ukspf@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Support to develop your proposal and to complete your application is available from the Nottingham City UKSPF Team, if required.

However, please note, applications must be received from the applicant organisation directly and while help and support in completing your application is entirely acceptable, we would encourage you to write the full application in your own words and to have a full understanding of the application if any clarification is requested.