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Nottingham
City Council

2025-2026 UKSPF Open Calls

FAQs

Questions which apply to both OC1 and OC2

Who should be involved in writing the application?

We suggest, based on experience, that staff who will be leading a proposed project should be involved in developing the delivery model and writing the grant application.

Is there a limit on project management costs?

No. Applicants are asked to detail how much they will spend on project management costs in their application. This will form part of the application assessment.

Will TUPE apply?

Our understanding is that TUPE will not apply as projects are funded through a grant. Grant funding is inherently non-commercial, and its cessation does not constitute a "transfer of undertaking" under TUPE. TUPE is designed to apply primarily in commercial contexts, such as the transfer of a business or a service contract between providers. In contrast, grant-funded activities operate under distinct principles:

- Non-commercial and project-specific: Grant funding is typically allocated for specific projects with defined objectives, rather than for ongoing commercial operations.
- Not a "service provision transfer": Unlike service contracts, grants are not agreements to deliver services on behalf of a client. They are financial contributions provided to deliver particular outcomes.
- No continuity of a commercial entity: When one grant ends and another begins, even if the activities appear similar, this does not signify the continuation of a commercial business or contract. Such continuity is a prerequisite for TUPE to apply.

As a result, the end of one grant funded project and the initiation of a new one generally falls outside the scope of TUPE protections. You may wish, though, to take your own independent advice

Can an applicant apply for both revenue and capital under the Open Calls?

Yes, applicants are able to apply for both revenue and capital funding under Open Call 1. However, there is no capital funding available under Open Call 2.

Could we meet with colleagues in the Nottingham City Council UKSPF team to discuss the Open Call and/or our proposed approach?

To ensure fairness, colleagues in the Nottingham City Council UKSPF team are unable to have individual meetings with prospective applicants. Questions and points of clarification should be emailed to ukspf@nottinghamcity.gov.uk and these will be responded to. Responses to any questions will also be included in updated versions of this document.

Is there a deadline for submitting questions regarding the Open Call process?

Questions and points of clarification may be submitted to ukspf@nottinghamcity.gov.uk up to midday on Friday 31st January 2025.

How will being on a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) or reducing output/outcome profiles impact bidding for the open call for existing NCC UKSPF grant recipients?

Being subject to a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) or agreeing to a grant variation to reduce the total grant value does not prevent an organisation from submitting an application. These actions are not considered financial clawback (see Stage 1: Gateway Criteria).

When completing the application, responses should accurately reflect:

- The organisation's experience and track record in managing, delivering, and reporting on UKSPF-funded projects.
- The processes implemented to achieve agreed-upon profiles and targets.

Additionally, responses should demonstrate how prior experience informs the approach to addressing future underperformance, including corrective actions or support mechanisms planned to ensure improvement.

Applications will be assessed using the scoring framework outlined in Appendix A of the Invitation to Bid document. Scores will be based on the quality of the responses provided.

Questions specific to OC1 – Employment Support for Inactive Individuals

You are looking to award at least 3 projects under Open Call 1 - can applicants therefore submit more than one application (for different types of project ideas)?

No. Applicants can submit only a single application for Open Call 1.

Will the following eligibility apply as it has for current UKSPF projects: 'economically inactive and long term unemployed who have been through DWP programmes'?

No. The focus of OC1 is economically inactive individuals only.

Support for long term unemployed individuals was a bespoke intervention under the Nottingham City Council 2022-2025 UKSPF programme for which we needed to seek permission from Government to allow us to support that group. This will not be available under the 2025-2026 Nottingham City Council UKSPF programme.

The definition of economically inactive for UKSPF project purposes is those not in work and not actively seeking work (unlike unemployed individuals who are actively seeking work). Not all economically inactive individuals claim benefits. For those that do, this would include those claiming either "legacy" benefits or those within specific conditionality regimes in Universal Credit (UC). The former includes Employment Support Allowance (ESA), Incapacity Benefit (IB) and Income Support (IS). The latter includes claimants within the Preparation Requirement or Work Focused Interview Requirement conditionality regimes (or equivalent for all the above).

Are NCC looking at alternatives to support unemployed residents who are not in employment?

Outside of the UKSPF programme NCC will be looking at how we can maximise support for unemployed people in Nottingham through existing and emerging national programmes such as Connect to work. We will also be working with EMCCA to inform the delivery of any regional interventions for unemployed people that they may develop/fund.

If someone gains employment during UKSPF 2024-2025 can they enrol on UKPSF 2025-2026 to receive support to sustain employment and achieve 6 months of sustained employment?

No. The eligibility requirement post April 2025 will be that the participant must be economically inactive upon joining the project. If an individual is already in employment, they will not qualify as they won't be economically inactive.

To claim outputs and outcomes under the 2025-26 project, organisations must demonstrate that these results are directly attributable to activities or support provided by the project after 1st April 2025.

Certain outputs and outcomes achieved under the current programme may be claimed again for the same individual or business in the 2025-2026 project. For example, individuals reporting increased employability through interpersonal skills development funded by UKSPF. However, new baselines must be established and properly evidenced at the start of the 2025-2026 project.

Can UKSPF funds be used to cover or contribute to the salaries of economically inactive participants who secure employment?

Section 6 of the OC1 Invitation to Bid document outlines the project costs eligible for coverage using Revenue funds. This includes **Staff Salary Costs** but excludes salary costs for participants. The mention of **Participant Costs / Hardship Support** refers to financial assistance that helps participants progress into or maintain employment. This support is not intended to cover or contribute to participant salaries.

How many Economically Inactive participants is Nottingham City Council committing to support, and how many outputs and outcomes will be delivered, using its 2025-26 UKSPF allocation?

In the UKSPF 2025–26 Technical Note, published by the Government in December 2024, it was stated: “Places with a new or revised devolution deal that is operational by 31 March 2025 [...] are not required to submit a revised investment plan. We simply ask that lead local authorities update us on plans for 2025–26 through routine reporting.”

As a result, Nottingham City Council is not required to propose the number of inactive participants to be supported with 2025–26 funding (or the related outputs and outcomes that will be achieved) to EMCCA or the Government before the start of the 2025–26 financial year. The number of inactive participants we can support and the outputs and outcomes that they will achieve will primarily depend on the figures included in successful OC1 projects.

Questions specific to OC2 – Supporting Local Businesses

You are looking to award at least one project under Open Call 2 Lot 1 - can applicants therefore submit more than one application for Open Call 2 Lot 1 (for different types of project ideas)?

No. Applicants are not able to apply for grants to deliver more than one project under Open Call 2 Lot 1.

Applicants can submit only a single application for Open Call 2. If they wish, in this application they can apply for grants to deliver one project under Lot 1, one project under Lot 2 and one project under Lot 3.

Would business which have previously received support through the 2024/2025 UKSPF project eligible for support in a 2025/2026 UKSPF Project?

- Economically inactive individuals and businesses that received support through a project funded by NCC's current UKSPF programme remain eligible for support in projects funded under the 2025-26 Open Calls.
- To claim outputs and outcomes under the 2025-26 project, organisations must demonstrate that these results are directly attributable to activities or support provided by the project after 1st April 2025.
- Certain outputs and outcomes achieved under the current programme may be claimed again for the same individual or business in the 2025-26 project. For example, improved productivity or individuals reporting increased employability through interpersonal skills development funded by UKSPF. However, new baselines must be established and properly evidenced at the start of the 2025-26 project.
- Evidence used to claim outputs and outcomes in the current project cannot be reused to claim the same outputs or outcomes in the new project.