Nottingham City Council
UK Shared Prosperity Fund
2025-2026

Community Support Grant
Essential Skills

Applicant Guidance Notes

1. Introduction

This guidance is intended to provide information to potential applicants to the Nottingham City Council Community Support Grant – Essential Skills.

Nottingham City Council is looking to use funding from its UK Shared Prosperity Fund to improving access and increased referrals to essential skills in Nottingham. Focus areas are ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages), Digital Skills, and Numeracy. Recognising that delivery in the community is key to helping improve the take up.

Funded through the UKSPF, the grant operates over a one stage application process by the submission of a full application.

Examples of eligible projects

We aim to support projects that improve access to essential skills and encourage progression in learning (including NCC's Community and Family Learning provision).

We are particularly looking to support projects that engage economically inactive households and the most vulnerable residents in our communities move closer to employment by addressing social exclusion or isolation due to age, gender, ethnicity, health or sexuality.

Specifically, we are looking to fund initiatives that:

1. **Expand access to ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes, with a focus on conversational sessions that lead to increased referrals for further ESOL provision.**

   Examples of eligible projects could include:

   - incorporating language learning through nursery rhymes and everyday conversations.
   - **Life at School in England:** ESOL sessions providing parents with information to help prepare young children starting school, including what as a parent they can expect.
   - **Men's Conversation Clubs**: Focused ESOL sessions for men to improve workplace communication and social integration
   - **Older Adults Social ESOL**: Gentle-paced ESOL classes combined with social activities to reduce isolation.

2. **Enhance digital access and skills, ensuring more people can confidently use technology and progress into formal digital skills training.**

   Examples of eligible projects could include

   - **Mobile Access for Older Residents:** Training on using smartphones for essential services like GP appointments, banking, and social connections.

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- **Online Safety**: Sessions teaching individuals (in particular older people and vulnerable young people e.g. care leavers) about online security, responsible internet use and identify potential online scams

- **Digital Photography:** How to take stunning photographs and use editing software with a smartphone

3. **Provide non-accredited numeracy training, supporting individuals in developing practical maths skills and encouraging progression into accredited courses.**

   Examples of eligible projects could include:

   - **Budgeting and Money Management:** Interactive sessions on managing household expenses, understanding bills, and saving money.

   - **Everyday Numeracy for Older Adults:** Focused on improving confidence in handling money, measuring medication doses, and understanding offers in shops.

   - **Training of numeracy champions** – Sessions aimed to providing people with the skills to help friends, peers, members of their community to feel more confident with dealing with numbers in everyday life.

4. **Help participants to develop other skills which would help to reduce isolation or exclusion and to progress into employment**

   Examples of eligible projects could include:

   - **Volunteering & Leadership Training:** Supporting people into community roles with confidence-building, communication, and basic administration skills.

   - **Functional Literacy & Numeracy Blended Sessions:** Combining basic reading and maths skills for practical use in daily life.

Please Note – The example activities given above are not an exhaustive list and applicants can propose alternatives, however any activities delivered using this grant must not duplicate the activities already delivered as part of the Nottingham City Council Community & Family Learning (CFL) provision.

The activities delivered as part of the projects funded through this grant should support additional engagement in skills development and encourage progression to further learning opportunities.

In order to ensure that your proposed activity does not duplicate any planned CFL provision, please check the Nottingham CFL Next Steps guide (Sep 24) before preparing an application.

2. Grant Amount

The funding available to organisations through this grant scheme is **revenue** funding.

The maximum amount available per project application is £25,000

The minimum amount available per project application is £10,000

This funding can be used to contribute to:

- the salary costs of colleagues involved in project delivery, management and administration
- volunteers' expenses
- digital and IT equipment required to support delivery of project activities* (up to a maximum of £2,499)
- other materials and resources required for delivery of the activities (up to a maximum of £2,499)

Organisations that were previously awarded a UKSPF Digital Capital Grant by Nottingham City Council are not able to include any digital or IT equipment in their application for this grant.

Funding may not be used to incentivise attendance at the activities or to contribute to the costs of participants accessing the provision.

Match Funding

Although match funding is not required, there is an opportunity for applicants to identify the value of any in-kind contributions in their application.

Local authorities have been strongly encouraged to consider match funding from the private, public and third sectors and leverage options when selecting communities and place projects to fund. This will maximise the value for money and impact of the fund

Organisations will need to provide quotes from suppliers for proposed equipment as part of the application process. They will also be required to provide proposed timescales for when the grant funding will need to be paid. Therefore, applicants should consider their own cash-flow situation into account when planning the timing of your project, paying project invoices etc.

Payment of grant funds to support cash-flow can be considered if it is included as part of the application, however Grant recipients would be required to repay any grant received if any support, or equipment, included in the application is not delivered, or purchased, or as specified in their grant agreement.

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

3. Project Outputs and Outcomes

The Community Support Grant (Essential Skills) aims to support projects that deliver some, or all, of the following outputs and outcomes.

Outputs

Outputs Indicator for Reporting	Unit of Measurement	Evidence Required
Number of people participating in adult numeracy provision	Number of people	• One register showing attendance
Number of adults participating in maths qualifications and courses up to, and including, Level 2 equivalent	Number of adults	• One register showing attendance • Qualification name and level
Number of people supported to access basic skills courses	Number of people	• One register showing attendance
Number of people supported to participate in education	Number of people	• One register showing attendance

Outcomes

Outcomes Indicator for Reporting	Unit of Measurement	Evidence Required
Number of people with basic skills following support	Number of people	• Certificates of attendance or completion
People gaining a qualification or completing a course following support	Number of people	• Copies of certificates or qualifications achieved
Number of adults achieving maths qualifications up to, and including, Level 2 equivalent	Number of adults	• Certificates or transcripts from accredited institutions
Number of people in education/training following support	Number of people	• Enrolment records or acceptance letters from educational institutions
Jobs created as a result of support (in your organisation)	Number of Full time equivalent (FTE)	• Number of Full time equivalent (FTE) • Job title(s) in your organisation

Jobs safeguarded as a result of support (in your organisation)	Number of full time equivalent (FTE)	• Number of Full time equivalent (FTE) • Job title(s) in your organisation

* UKSPF Output and Outcome definitions can be found [here](). Please read carefully before you input proposed numbers.

4. General Eligibility Criteria

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 Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), Community Interest Company (CIC), Company Limited by Guarantee, Social Enterprise, Registered charity, Public body which delivers or hosts community projects or a constituted body, a private company or business
- Have been in operation for at least 12 months
- Have been delivering skills development courses and activities in Nottingham City for at least 12 months.
- Not have an outstanding debt with Nottingham City Council

5. Procurement

Where organisations are buying digital and IT equipment and are able to claim back the VAT, the grant should only be used to cover the net cost (i.e. the cost excluding VAT).

All supplier quotes must clearly specify if VAT is applicable, and state the 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 **must**:

- Not have purchased any 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

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6. 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
- Financial charges, such as bank charges and interest
- Organisations in difficulty
- Organisations 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
- 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

7. 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 www.gov.uk/government/collections/subsidy-control-regime

Any aid awarded to you under the Community Support 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.

8. Geographical Areas Covered

Be located within or deliver your services within the administrative area covered by Nottingham City Council.

9. Timeframe

The Community Support Grant (Essential Skills will be open to applications **until 23:59 on Monday 5th May 2025.**

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

All projects funded through the Scheme **must be** fully completed and all grant funding **spent** by applicants by 31st March 2026.

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10. Application Process

Step 1 – Full Application

If your organisation and project is eligible for support through the Community Support Grant (Essential Skills), you should send in your full application form, which can be found here

Step 2 – Project Assessment

Completed applications must be sent by email to ukspf@nottinghamcity.gov.uk by **23:59 on Monday 5th May 2025.**

Assessment will involve four stages;

1. **Gateway – using Section 1 of the Application form**

2. **Scoring – using Section 2 of the Application form**

   The maximum score for each question in the application form is 5, based on the scoring framework below, but some are weighted through the multiplication of the assigned score. For example, a score of 5 weighted by a factor of 4 will equal a total score of 20. The maximum score and multiplication weightings are shown on the application form in the dark grey box to the right of each question.

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Score	Assessment	Description
0	Unacceptable	Response to the question is unacceptable or no response received. Does not give the Fund confidence in the ability of the bidder to deliver the proposed project.
1	Poor/Weak Response	Inadequate detail provided or some of the answer not directly relevant to the question. Is supported by none or a weak standard of evidence in several areas giving rise to concern about the ability of the bidder to deliver the proposed project.
2	Below Expectations	Limited information provided, and/or a response that is inadequate or only partially addresses the question giving rise to concern about the ability of the bidder to deliver the proposed project.
3	Satisfactory Response	Acceptable response in terms of the level of detail, accuracy and relevance. Is supported by a satisfactory standard of evidence in most areas but a few areas lacking detail/evidence giving rise to some concerns about the ability of the bidder to deliver the proposed project.
4	Good Response	Comprehensive response in terms of detail and relevance to the question and supported by good standard of evidence. Gives the Fund confidence in the ability of the bidder to deliver the proposed project. Meets the Fund's requirements.
5	Very Good Response	As Good, but to a better degree in terms of precision and relevance. Is comprehensive and supported by a high standard of evidence. Gives

		the Fund a high level of confidence in the ability of the bidder to deliver the proposed project. May exceed the Fund's requirements in some respects, for example, added value such as integration/synergy with other projects.

3. Moderation

Scores will be reviewed, in order to ensure consistency and fairness.

Grants will be awarded to the applicants with the highest score. The number of successful organisations will be dependent on the availability of funds.

4. Further Moderation (if required)

Where applications tie on scores, further moderation criteria will be applied as detailed in Stage 4, or applicants may be invited to discuss/negotiate their total project values.

In selecting projects, caps will be applied in line with the maximum total funding available. This may result in applicants being invited to discuss/negotiate their total project values or the proportions of revenue and capital funding

All eligible, acceptable grant applications will be assessed using the methodology above and the applicant informed of the outcome in writing.

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Successful applicants will enter into a grant agreement with Nottingham City Council.

The decision of the award of the grants is final and there is no process of appeal.

Step 3 - Grant Offer

If the application is successful, you will be notified in writing and a Grant Agreement will be issued. Any award will be made based on the terms and conditions outlined within the 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, the payment of the grants will be approved. You will not be required to send invoices for this Grant.

50% of grant will be paid after receiving the signed grant agreement in June 2025 (covering June – October 2025 delivery). Subject to satisfactory performance the remain 50% will be paid in November (covering November 2025 – March 2026 delivery).

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

11. Performance and Monitoring

Grant recipients will be required to report progress against the output and outcomes in their grant agreement at the end of October 2025 and in March 2026.

Further details of the performance and monitoring processes will be included in the grant agreement.

12. 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 Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government and East Midlands County Combined Authority (EMCCA) who

are the grant scheme's funder.

13. 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.