

Disability Project Parish Grants Award Scheme

Guidance notes for applicants

Applications to the Disability Project Parish Grants scheme will be considered within the following framework.

For applications to the Small Grants stream, we aim to issue a decision within 6 weeks of receiving your application. For applications to the Large Grants stream, we aim for a decision within 9 weeks of receiving your application. These time scales are subject to variation and depend on many factors, including any need for further information from the applicant parish, checking and verifying details of the application, volume of applications received, and so on.

Assessment framework for the scheme

All applications must clearly indicate how the work would enhance accessibility and inclusion for those who are Deaf, disabled and/or neurodivergent within the context of the applicant parish: those that fail this test will be rejected without further consideration.

Applications will next be considered against the following criteria, grouped under the broad headings of Benefit, Finances, and Due Diligence.

Benefit

There should be evidence of consultation with people who would benefit from the work, testifying their agreement that the proposed work would benefit them.

This benefit should be the main focus of the work, rather than a minor side-effect of work with a different overall aim.

For large grants, the benefit must be long-term, demonstrably continuing beyond the duration of the project. Salaries, utility bills and other ongoing running costs will not be considered eligible.

For small grants, the benefit may be less quantifiable; it may consist of a change in outlook and understanding (for example, events, training, new partnerships, purchase of resources enabling inclusion and participation).

Finances

The PCC annual report and financial statements are provided.

Parishes may have some financial resources and/or partnership funding to accompany their application, particularly if the project cost exceeds the grant-funding cap, but this is neither a condition nor a contributory factor to approval.

If the work is co-funded with funds from elsewhere, all relevant details should be supplied of the co-funding organisation and the amounts granted from there. These sources must be in keeping with the vision of the Church of England.

We would not encourage applications for work which could be considered trivial in nature or scope (work below the value of £500).

Due diligence

The work should be outlined in detail, with evidence of good research and reasonable certainty that the work could be achieved within the funding applied for and timeline indicated

We would need to see evidence of appropriately skilled and resourced volunteers or staff members to progress the project as detailed.

The timeline for the work should be within 2 years of its start date.

Any alterations to buildings should be likely to gain faculty/pass DAC approval. We will be conferring with the DAC for the diocese on this as part of our process, but it would be helpful if you could indicate any conversations you have conducted to check whether this work is likely to be approved.

Eligibility guide: buildings

All applications for work affecting buildings must demonstrate that the scope of the project covers eligible buildings as follows:

Eligible buildings are considered to be Church of England consecrated church buildings and licensed places of worship (including those which are the subject of sharing agreements or ecumenical partnerships) serving parishes in the 12 Northern dioceses including the diocese of Sodor and Man.

A community hall is considered an eligible building if it is within the ownership of the PCC and in use to promote the mission of the church.

Eligibility extends to the churchyard and other spaces surrounding eligible buildings.

Ineligible buildings are other buildings or structures in the churchyard or curtilage of eligible buildings which are not in ecclesiastical use; cathedrals; churches and chapels which are the responsibility of private owners or institutions; Church of England churches outside England or the Isle of Man; non-Anglican places of worship; closed and closing churches.

Links to further resources and helpful information

The following two pages provide downloadable documents giving advice and guidance on increasing accessibility to church buildings and creating a “*place to belong*” for all. The document names are given as bullet-points in the following list.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/advice-and-guidance-church-buildings/accessibility>

- *Equal access to church buildings*

<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/barrier-free-belonging/barrier-free-belonging-resources>

- *All Stand – lived experience of accessibility within the Church*
- *Disability and Accessibility – Practical ways to make your venue more inclusive and accessible*
- *A place to belong Guide*

The Disability Project Team will also be happy to help with any queries and can be contacted by email at disabilityproject@churchofengland.org.