

Active Black Country - Tackling Inequalities Fund

The Active Black Country partnership is the Active Partnership (AP) for the Black Country. We aim to create an Active, Healthy region. Our organisation has a passionate belief that physical activity and sport can change people's lives and that it is every resident's right to be physically active and play sport.

A central theme of our approach is our Communities theme, that aims to understand underrepresented groups' needs, motivations, fears and barriers to change. To support the development of attainable inclusive opportunities for people to be active and play sport.

Pre Covid-19 the Black Country contained some of the most deprived and physically inactive areas nationally. The Covid-19 pandemic threatens to increase the existing underlying inequalities, potentially have a lasting impact on health & well-being for a number of years.

Sport England have provided Active Black Country with 'Tackling Inequalities funding' to invest across the region and work with those networks, community organisations and clubs within the most deprived areas. We want to ensure that we support those in greatest need to continue to deliver a vital service and/or increase their reach into communities and residents who are most at risk.

Sport England Funding Focus

The fund is designed to target audiences comprised of the following:

- Lower Socio-Economic Groups
- Black, Asian Minority Ethnic Communities
- Disabled People
- People with Long-Term Health Conditions (LTHC)

The funding is specifically designed to:

- To minimise the impact of COVID-19 on activity levels in under-represented groups, ensuring that the physical activity participation inequality gap does not widen during this period in targeted communities.
- To enable community groups working with target audiences to continue to exist and retain the resources and capability to recover at the appropriate time.
- To provide funding for community groups working with Sport England target audiences to remain connected with their participants and keeping them active in the COVID-19 lockdown and early recovery stages.
- To strengthen relationships between system partners and community bodies working with under-represented groups.

The Tackling Inequalities fund provides an opportunity to utilise those networks and understanding of the Black Country to ensure that investment is shaped for the benefit of communities in the greatest need and have as much impact as possible. We will ensure 100% of the funding reaches community organisations and seek to avoid duplication with any existing work. To develop our approach, we have consulted with Local Authorities, CVS and other community and charitable organisations, to gain views on the best use for the funding based on the needs of the Black Country.

The funding approach will consist of a "Local" fund available within selected geographical areas and a "Themed" fund focusing on three key development themes across the Black Country.

Funding

The funding approach will consist of a “Local” fund available within selected geographical areas and a number of “Themed” funds focusing on key thematic areas that have been identified:

1. Local fund

The focus of the inequalities fund is to support those in greatest need. The underlying inequality across the Black Country is deprivation and to support this we will target applications across the most deprived and physically inactive ward areas.

A list of the priority wards are as follows:

Wolverhampton	Sandwell	Walsall	Dudley
Bushbury South and Low Hill	Friar Park	Birchills Leamore	Netherton, Woodside and St. Andrews
Ettingshall	Princes End	Darlaston South	Castle and Priory
East Park	West Bromwich Central	Willenhall South	St. Thomas's

Please check if your project location is eligible and falls within these wards by using the [Ward eligibility checker](#).

The Local fund is available to Black Country based organisations that utilise sport and physical towards the specified target audiences. We acknowledge that many organisations we are seeking to support through this fund may have a much wider remit than just sport and physical activity. Where this is the case, we are still able to support, however we would want there to be a clear distinction of sport and physical activity either through their previous delivery or their demonstrable ability to deliver to the target audience in future.

Organisations will be able to apply into the Local fund to support the following:

Hardship: Organisations that are experiencing short term financial hardship can apply for funding if their usual operations or services for the target audience have been negatively impacted by Covid-19. This could entail financial support for ongoing maintenance and utility costs (such as rent or utility) and/or loss of income due to, for example, cancelled sessions or events.

Finding new ways of keeping our target audience active in this period: Organisations can apply to deliver initiatives which can keep the target audience active during the current crisis. We are interested in both innovative ideas or what has previously worked well with the target audiences. It is important that any idea is formed in accordance with maintaining social distancing as per Government guidelines. Examples may include remote/digital/virtual delivery (Digital Activation) gardening (whilst social distancing) or even activity packs.

ABC do not want to be too prescriptive with the solutions and are eager to understand the insight into the target audiences that organisations have that are informing their ideas around what will have a positive impact.

Funding Awards

The funding range for applications is between **£500 - £3000**.

Applications

Further detail on the criteria and application forms will be made available to organisations for the Local Fund.

We want to get funding to where it is needed and quickly. We do not want the process to become onerous or difficult. Therefore, we will provide a template or alternatively organisations can choose to provide us with a video which captures the project idea or hardship need for the funding. Please note, for any video containing footage of anyone under 16, parental consent must be obtained.

Organisations can feel free to be as simple or creative as they see fit and it is always a good idea (if possible) to include some of the beneficiaries to bring it to life. All applications (written or visual) still need to address each of the questions on the application template and should be clear regarding the amount of funding being requested.

There is no deadline for the fund and applications will be assessed on a rolling basis. Once in receipt of applications we aim to assess and provide responses within 14 working days.

Telephone Interviews: Following on from an initial assessment we will then arrange an appropriate time and date for a short follow up call for any projects that we can take forward.

Panel assessment: Applications being considered under the 'Local Fund' will be reviewed by an independent panel consisting of representation from key stakeholders. We will then notify organisations of the panel's decision shortly thereafter.

Monitoring and Evaluation

We understand that in times of need rigorous amounts of reporting throughout the project can be time consuming and restrict the great work being conducted to support those in need. However, it is also critical that we understand the impact the funds are having along with what does and doesn't work to inform future delivery. There will be an end of project template to capture key information, additionally, rather than reporting throughout, ABC would like a live and instantaneous snapshot of the fund's impact (thereby monitoring through a variety of means). In summary, monitoring will be captured by;

- End of project report
- Case Study (Written, images or Video)
- Representation at the Active Black Country virtual community of practices
- Social media post linked to Active Black Country

2. Themed Fund

Active Black Country will also coordinate a number of themed funds focusing on key development areas aligned to the specified target audiences. It is important that the allocation of this part of the investment is designed and assessed in collaboration with local authorities and Community Voluntary Sector organisations.

We know there are emerging themes across the region which are exacerbated by deprivation and inequalities. We accept that these issues require more investment because they are long term and deep-rooted issues and we will look to work with projects that can build understanding of the longer-term solutions or identify further opportunities to get the target audiences active at scale.

The development areas are as follows:

- **Active/Sustainable Travel (Walking & Cycling)**
- **Domestic Violence/Supporting Vulnerable Women, Men &/or Children**
- **Mental Health**

We will work with key stakeholders to identify organisations that can deliver initiatives which can keep the target audience active during the current crisis. We are interested in new and innovative ideas or what has previously worked well with the target audience. It is important that any idea is formed in accordance with maintaining social distance and government guidelines. We do not want to be too prescriptive with the solutions, and so will let insight into the target audiences inform delivery.

Funding awards: The total funding allocation for each development theme area is £20,000. However, we expect to make a number of awards under each theme area and will judge each idea on a case by case basis.

Applications: We want to discuss the idea that your organisation may have and once we receive your application, we will arrange an appropriate time and date for a follow up call to explore in further detail.

Panel assessment: Organisations being considered under the 'Themed Fund' will be reviewed by an independent panel consisting of representation from key stakeholders. We will then notify organisations of the panel's decision shortly thereafter.

Monitoring and Evaluation: We understand that in times of need rigorous amounts of reporting throughout the project can be time consuming and restrict the great work being conducted to support those in need. However, it is also critical that we understand the impact the funds are having along with what does and doesn't work to inform future delivery. There will be an end of project template to capture key information, additionally, rather than reporting throughout, ABC would like a live and instantaneous snapshot of the fund's impact (thereby monitoring through a variety of means). In summary, monitoring will be captured by;

- End of project report
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3. Funding Criteria

What we can Fund:

- Equipment
- Live streaming platform licences
- Instructor/Deliverer costs
- Administration
- Other (services/items deemed necessary for successful engagement)
- training costs
- transport costs
- volunteer expenses

What we cannot fund:

- one-off events
- staff costs
- utilities/running costs
- alcohol
- contingency costs, loans, endowments or interest
- profit-making/fundraising activities
- VAT you can reclaim
- statutory activities
- overseas travel
- campaigning activities
- religious activities (we can fund religious organisations if their project benefits the wider community)
- political or lobbying activities.

Please note: Organisations cannot make applications to both the “Local fund” and the “Themed fund”

Timescale:

All projects must be completed by October 2020

Eligible organisations/groups:

- Community Organisations, Sports Clubs, Places of Worship, Voluntary sector organisations, Schools, Friends of parks group and any formally constituted groups.

Non eligible organisations/groups:

- Sole Traders, Individuals, private businesses or profit-making organisations unless they are a Social Enterprise or Community Interest Company. We cannot fund any capital projects and/or activities or costs already covered by other Government schemes including rates and also any activities promoting religious or political beliefs.

Please note: In order to meet the eligibility criteria for the fund, entities must be formally constituted. However, we are aware that ideas generated from within the community may come from individuals and/or un-constituted informal groups. Therefore, where this is the case we may contact your local Voluntary Services Council to determine if they have capacity to support groups to become constituted.

Please note: All projects incorporating digital activation will need to ensure deliverers have the appropriate industry related qualifications and will have to complete a safeguarding checklist for digital activation. Active Black Country have produced a resource to support digital activation safeguarding online.

Please note: Further consideration will be given to applicants who have not been in receipt of the previous Sport England “Community Investment Fund” (CEF). We will not be able to accept any duplicate applications for funding already received from the Sport England Community Emergency Fund. However, additional funding is acceptable if a further financial need is evident.

All completed applications must be sent to Jennifer Oakes at Active Black Country:

jennifer_oakes@blackcountryconsortium.co.uk

4. Organisational Development

Throughout this period, it is critical that we all have the ability to restart and reset and in particular that organisations have a basis to recover and rebuild into what could be a very different world post Covid-19 and social distancing measures. Key to this is enabling community groups working with target audiences to continue to exist and retain the resources and capability to recover at the appropriate time. Additionally, we are keen to increase the resilience, capacity and capability of organisations to be sustainable into the future.

We know from our research that organisations with reach into these target groups may have a lack of capacity and confidence to execute more traditional grant processes. Equally, we know that for many the usual forms of generating income through participation, events and other social gatherings have been significantly reduced due to the ramifications of Covid-19.

Therefore, Active Black Country will be implementing a programme of alternative options to help organisations to diversify their income and reimagine the contribution they can make to their communities for the future.

Active Black Country Webinar Series

We will be providing a series of webinars for organisations over the forthcoming weeks and months underpinning the inequalities fund.

- Virtual Funding webinar
- Crowdfunding webinar
- Community Shares webinar
- Digital Activation webinar
- Philanthropy webinar
- Governance webinar

Active Black Country Virtual Community of Practice

Series of virtual round the table chats with deliverers of the Inequalities fund to share best practice, approaches and challenges.

Online resources, advice and guidance

Online menu of support through the [Active Black Country website](#).