

Sport England's Together Fund: Delivered by Versus Arthritis

Guidance Notes

Introduction to the Together Fund

The Together Fund has been set up to:

- Help reduce the long-term impact and aid recovery from COVID-19
- The widening of the inequalities in sport and physical activity.
- This fund will support specific activities to increase availability of exercise opportunities in local communities.

The Together Fund will continue to evolve in line with our approach to date, building on ways in which we can continue to narrow the gap for communities that need our support. When we started out on this journey, COVID-19 was in its relative infancy, we were all coming to terms with what it meant and trying to understand how we could best support community sport and physical activity. We knew it was having a significant impact on communities and there was a need for an immediate response. We are finding out more as we go and starting to move from an immediate critical response to one looking at recovery, the long-term impacts of COVID-19 and emergence from, rather than reaction to.

We particularly welcome applications from organisations who support people with long-term health conditions, people from lower socio-economic groups, culturally diverse communities and disabled people to get physically active.

Higher than average mortality rates from COVID-19 have created a culture of fear where people are choosing to stay indoors to keep safe. We also know disabled people and those with long term health conditions are more likely to continue self-isolating because of the increased risk to their health.

Versus Arthritis with Sport England want to address and prevent the likely reduction of marginalised communities driving sport and physical activity forward, by fostering and protecting community bodies, coaches and volunteers.

Please note we expect this fund to be oversubscribed and it will close once we receive sufficient high-quality applications.

Versus Arthritis

Versus Arthritis exists to empower people to push back against the limits of arthritis, by providing tailored support, information and advice, and campaigning for greater awareness and positive change. Everything we do is underpinned by our investment in exceptional research and insight provided by people living with arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions.

We are acting as a National Partner of Sport England to deliver grant money from the Together Fund to local, community-based organisations.

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Through the physical activity programme, Versus Arthritis aims to support reducing the inequalities in physical activity experienced by people with long term health conditions. COVID-19 has worsened these inequalities: during the height of the pandemic around 4 in 10 people with long-term health conditions reported doing less physical activity than normal ([We are Undefeatable data, June 2020](#)).¹

People with long-term health conditions and those from underserved groups have been particularly affected by the pandemic. These include people with disabilities, people from lower socio-economic groups and people from culturally diverse communities. We are keen to reduce the inequalities experienced by these groups and encourage applications that seek to redress the imbalance.

Available grants

Grants between £1,000 and £5,000 are being offered as part of the fund.

Additional funding may be available above the £5,000 but you will need to discuss this with a member of the Versus Arthritis team before submitting the application.

Please email [Physical Activity team](#).

Funding should be spent by 31st March 2023, as the aim of the fund is to address the recovery and long-term impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, as opposed to funding longer-term projects.

Organisations in England (outside London) should be working to increase the availability of exercise opportunities for people with long-term health conditions in local communities, reducing the negative impact that COVID-19 has had on widening the inequalities in sport and physical activity. Applications are particularly welcome from groups who also support people from lower socio-economic groups, culturally diverse communities, and disabled people.

Please note that we are not offering these funds to groups within London, this is because there are a significant number of other funding schemes already available in the city. If you are based in London and wish to know more information about these please contact [Lenka Pisova](#).

Funding should be spent within six months of being awarded.

If your organisation does not ordinarily provide activities for the targeted groups as a priority group(s), please tell us in your application how you intend to reach out to include more people from these target groups.

Eligibility criteria for funding

Applicant organisations must be working with at least one of the target groups mentioned in point 2 with a specific focus on long term health conditions. We welcome applications from community groups and local organisations working with the groups we are trying to reach, even if you have never delivered a sport, physical activity, or exercise project before.

We particularly welcome applications from disability-led (where 51 per cent or more of the organisation's board and senior management team are disabled) and culturally diverse communities (where 51 per cent or more of the organisation's board and senior management team are from a

¹ [PowerPoint Presentation \(sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com\)](#)

culturally diverse community background) groups (Arts Council, 2019), as well as organisations/groups located within areas [classified as deprived](#).

Please note the following important information from Sport England regarding groups/projects that cannot be funded, or where certain processes will need to be put in place to enable funding.

Your organisation can apply if you are:

- A not-for-profit voluntary or community club or organisation
- A registered charity
- A not-for-profit company, community interest company or other social enterprise
- A statutory body
- Sole Trader/Partnerships and freelancers - please contact us before applying

Un-constituted groups

Sport England acknowledges that in some cases the ideas that you generate from within the community might come from individuals and/or un-constituted informal groups. Where this is the case, it is worth considering whether another Accountable Body, such as a VCS, could support the group and act as the applicant/manage the funds for them.

Football

Funding for grassroots football is being provided via the Football Association and Football Foundation [New funds launched to help grassroots football return \(thefa.com\)](#).

Gardening

Generally, this funding cannot be used to fund the sole purpose of gardening. However, if the gardening activity is part of a wider project that involves other forms of physical activity for example walking, cycling, outdoor gym exercise, we may consider this, please get in touch and we can discuss specific cases.

Religious groups and lottery funding

We welcome the contribution of all faith groups particularly given the role that many can play in connecting with the priority audiences. Please be aware that any funded activity should not be used to promote the religious beliefs of the organisations. Sport England are aware that some local religious groups will not be able to receive lottery funding due to the link with gambling. They are aware of this barrier. If groups cannot accept National Lottery funding for religious reasons, Sport England do have some very limited scope to fund organisations. Please speak to us if this is the case.

The grant can be used to fund any of the following. If you have other ideas which are not included on this list, please get in touch to see if it is something we will consider:

- Equipment/activity packs
- Live streaming platform licences
- Instructor/coach/deliverer costs
- Training/delivery costs
- Transport costs
- Volunteer costs or expenses
- Venue hire

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There are certain items that are not eligible for lottery funding as follows:

- Activities or costs which are already covered by other government funding including rates
- Capital works
- Activities promoting religious or political beliefs
- Where there is personal benefit to an individual
- Any private business or profit-making organisations unless they are a Social Enterprise or Community Interest Company
- Loss of Sponsorship or loan repayments
- Replacement of equipment (that is broken, tired, torn etc.)
- Contingency costs and VAT organisations are seeking to recover.
- Research and Evaluation

This list is not exhaustive, if you are unsure, please do get in touch.

Please consider the following questions when writing your application, as this is what Sport England ask Versus Arthritis to consider when assessing applications. Can you answer yes to each of the following?

1. Will this investment impact people with long-term health conditions? Ideally your project will also support people from one or more of the following audiences: lower socio-economic groups; culturally diverse communities; disabled people?
2. Is there a real 'here and now' requirement to support this audience (now to March 2023)?
3. Will this investment help people with long-term health conditions to be more physically active and/or help an organisation/group benefitting with long-term health conditions to continue to survive?
4. Is there a clear 'line of sight' from this investment to physical activity taking place either now, or in the immediate future (now to March 2023)?

What we anticipate the fund will achieve

Overall, the outcomes we expect to see from the fund are:

- People with long-term health conditions to maintain or increase levels of fitness
- People with long-term health conditions to keeping physically well and therefore reducing the likelihood of other illnesses
- Improvements in people's mental health and overall well-being
- Reduction in social isolation, enabling connectivity with others through exercising together e.g. online group class or, a personal trainer/personal assistant supporting with 1:1 exercise
- Opportunity to try new forms of exercise
- Creating opportunities to exercise for people who have not participated before e.g. found leisure centre inaccessible/too difficult to attend/expensive, or just "didn't know where to start"
- Some community groups and sports providers to be given a "new lease of life" and potentially enable them to benefit from new ways of providing support or a service

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The Application process

We have designed the application process to be as efficient as possible. Your application will proceed as follows:

- Complete the appropriate Together Fund Online Application Form on Versus Arthritis online grant management system [Grant Tracker](#)
- If you are a member of The Richmond Group of Charities, please ensure that you select The Richmond Group Application Form
Members of the Versus Arthritis team are available to support you with this if you require any assistance at this stage
- Versus Arthritis will check your responses and let you know if any information is incomplete or needs to be clarified
- Once complete, Versus Arthritis will undertake a review of your application and, if your project is recommended, we will send a summary to Sport England for final review. This will be taken from your application form and include basic information about your organisation and its reach, how much grant money you are applying for, how you intend to spend it and the impact you expect it to have
- Sport England will confirm or reject our decision, based on whether your organisation is receiving similar funding from another National Partner or Active Partnership
- We will let you know the outcome of ours and Sport England's decision. If successful, we will draw up an informal partnership agreement between us

We expect all funds to be awarded by 30th September 2022.

Next Steps if successful

Grant money

If successful, we will send you a grant award letter and request your bank details and will aim to pay your grant money within two weeks of receipt. Further details of the information we need will be given to you if your application is successful. We advise you to keep receipts of all spend related to the award, as our auditors may ask us to see these at any point.

We recognise that your project might need to change after it has been approved.

We want your project to have the best possible impact for people with long-term health conditions and we will work with you to make sure that you can adapt to changes in circumstances as they arise.

Capturing Impact / Partnership Agreement

Versus Arthritis would like to work with you to monitor the reach and the impact of funding. If you are successful, we will provide you with the details you need to collect to provide a report at the end of the project.

We will offer email and phone support to project leads as and when necessary, as well as receive learning and insights as stated in the partnership agreement. We may also ask project leads to take part in learning sessions with other organisations, sharing knowledge and insights on project delivery. We would also welcome any opportunities to facilitate peer support between organisations.

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We will ask for an end of project report from each successful applicant. This will be an online form which will include narrative and financial reporting. We will also be requesting case studies and other media to demonstrate the activities undertaken. We will be interested in keeping in touch regarding your project's future-plan to build on the learning from the funding.

Further Information and submitting your application form

If you would like any further information about the Together Fund, please contact:

Sophie Priestley (Trusts Manager) or Ashleigh Ahlquist (Physical Activity Manager), e-mail: [Physical Activity team](#).

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