

2018/19

Small Grants Communications Plan



Midlothian Council Communities Team

Supporting communities to engage, connect, develop and prosper

www.midlothian.gov.uk/yourcommunity



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Small Grants 2018/19**Communications Plan****1. Background**

Midlothian Council Small Grants Fund supports local projects aimed at improving the quality of life of people living in Midlothian.

Grant applications for 2018/19 open on 28 August 2017 and close on 6 October 2017. Applications for grants of up to £3000 are available under three separate streams:

- Developing Communities Fund
- Employability, Learning and Training Fund
- Health and Physical Activities Fund

2. Purpose

This communication plan sets out how Midlothian Council will promote the 2018/19 Small Grants Fund to prospective applicants to ensure effective communication and engagement.

3. Communications Objectives

- Increase uptake by promoting the Small Grants Fund, and the availability of financial support from its different funding streams, to as wide a range of Midlothian community groups, charities and social enterprises as possible.
- Raise general awareness of the Small Grants Fund and demonstrate its value in supporting specific projects and improving outcomes across Midlothian.
- Encourage and support applications from communities that experience high levels of disadvantage and have been under-represented in previous funding rounds.

4. Key Messages

- The aim of the Small Grants Fund is to provide funding for local projects aimed at improving the quality of life of people living in Midlothian communities. A community can either mean a geographical area or a community of interest.
- Applications, for grants of up to £3000, can be submitted by community groups, charities or social enterprises.
- There are three funding streams and applications can be made to more than one funding stream.
- Applications for 2018/19 must be submitted between 28 August and 6 October 2017.

5. Target Audiences

Primary

- Community groups
- Charities
- Local residents
- Third sector groups
- Social enterprises

Secondary

- Wider Midlothian community including:
 - Partner organisations
 - Local businesses
 - Specific interest groups

6. Communications Approach

- Review design, content and effectiveness of 2016 campaign advert/ poster
- Review grant application form for simplicity and ease of use
- Where possible, illustrate value of Small Grants Fund to groups/ communities by using examples of previous successful applications
- Use mix of media channels including local press and community radio as well as online
- Place emphasis on use of social media with regular facebook and twitter posts during application period
- Ensure publicity emphasises the support available to local groups in the form of further information and assistance in completing applications, generating ideas and developing new groups
- Disseminate information as widely as possible through existing networks, council contacts, previous applicants and partner organisations

7. Evaluation

The success of this communications plan will be evaluated after the closing date, based on the number of responses received and on feedback from local groups and individuals on publicity and the application process. We will continue to collate recipients' feedback to ensure lessons are learnt and processes can be improved.

8. Small Grants 2018/19 - Key Communications Activities

What	How	Who	Why	When
Launch fund applications	Launch press release Council website Partner websites Local press Evening News Local radio Community websites Social media Direct mailings to local groups Posters distributed	Communications/ Communities Team/ MVA	Promote funding scheme and encourage applications	W/B 28 August 2017
Social media campaign	Twitter and Facebook	Communications	Promote funding scheme and encourage applications	Launch W/B 28 August and regular reminders during September 2017
Profile success of previously funded projects	Press/ web article	Communications	Promote funding scheme through positive examples to encourage applications	W/B 18 September 2017
Reminder that application closing date is approaching	Web, Local press Social media Local radio	Communications	Reminder	W/B 25 September 2017
Applications close	Social media	Communications	Final reminder	2-4 Oct 2017 [Closing date 6 Oct 2017 at noon]