

DREAM FUND

Guidance notes 2026–27



The Dream Fund was created to encourage charities to collaborate and apply for their dream project. One award of £5,000,000 will be granted to a single transformational and groundbreaking project.

The Dream Fund supports charities to develop innovative solutions to society's most challenging problems. Applications that score highly in their originality, ambition and collaborative nature stand the highest chances of being successful.



Applicants are encouraged to be ambitious and creative in developing their project ideas. Please contact the Dream Fund team to discuss your project ideas and request feedback.

- The Dream Fund is a single award fund of **£5 million** to support a *dream* project in one or more areas of the United Kingdom.
- Organisations can apply to deliver a project that spans from 1 to 5 years in length.
- The Dream Fund encourages collaboration. Applications must be from two to four organisations.
- The lead partner **must** be a registered charity.
- Project partners can be charities, universities, companies, local authorities other not-for-profit organisations or research institutes.
- Applicants can apply more than once, either as a lead or a partner organisation, up to a maximum of twice.
- All applications must reserve at least **5%** of the budget for comms and PR activity to maximize promotion of the project.
- The lead partner must have an annual income that is at least **£5 million**. It is not possible to combine the incomes of the partners to attempt to reach the income threshold.
- Applications must be innovative, creative and original, and present projects that are a genuine 'dream'.

FUNDING PRIORITIES

The Dream Fund will be our biggest to date and has been created to support larger, more impactful and more innovative projects.

The Dream Fund is looking for large, innovative, systems changing, transformational projects – you can find some examples of previously funded projects on our website.

We welcome projects focused on the funding themes of the nine UK focused Postcode Trusts. These can include health, wellbeing, families, children, environmental conservation, biodiversity, wildlife and animals, culture and heritage and others.

What is critical is that the project ideas can deliver exceptionally strong impact and are pushing boundaries in terms of their innovation, rather than rigidly matching a pre-existing theme.

All great project ideas begin with understanding a clear problem and then using the skills, experience and resources of the project partners to craft a unique.

If you have an idea for a project, feel free to contact the Dream Fund team. You can reach them at info@postcodedreamfund.org.uk.

If your Dream Fund project idea is ready to go, then you can submit an expression of interest via the online form.

Also, feel free to forward on these guidance notes to relevant persons with your organisation. These could include innovation teams, operational teams or anyone else who can provide you with a world-beating project idea.

CONTACTS

- **Joe Ray**, Social Investment & Innovation Advisor: joseph.ray@postcodelottery.co.uk
- **Joanne Anderson**, Social Investment & Innovation Advisor: joanne.anderson@postcodelottery.co.uk



THE APPLICATION PROCESS

The Dream Fund has a three-stage application process:

Stage 1

If you have an idea for a project, please read the funding criteria to ensure your idea is eligible. You are welcome to send a summary of your project to info@postcodedreamfund.org.uk.

If your project idea meets the Dream Fund criteria you are then free to submit an expression of interest via the online form. The form consists of a few questions that allow you to detail the project vision, impact and plan, along with a short video pitch that shares more about your project.

Stage 1 runs from **25 March until 31 July**. Applicants will be informed of their progress via e-mail in September.

Stage 2

The most impressive projects will then be shortlisted and asked to submit a detailed business plan and an accompanying comms plan. Stage 2 will open for submissions from mid-September until mid-November.

The business plan should be no more than 15 pages and accompanying comms plan should be a max of 5 pages.

We will also require the following documentation from all partners:

- **Constitution/ Articles of Association/ Trust Deeds of all organisations**
- **Most recent annual (audited) accounts of all organisations**
- **Signed Partnership Agreement**

You must provide a signed partnership agreement that demonstrates how all partners will work together. For instance - who will be the lead organisation, how the funds will be managed and how disputes will be resolved. This must be signed by a representative from each organisation.

Stage 3

Stage 2 applicants will then be shortlisted again, and the very best entries will be asked to attend our offices in London to give a formal presentation on their project to the Dream Fund Assessment Panel. The presentations are scheduled for **January**. The winning projects will then be announced in **March 2027**.

APPLICATION SUPPORT

Artificial Intelligence guidelines

We recommend avoiding using AI to write your actual project idea.

However, you are welcome to use AI to test your idea and see how it can be enhanced for greater impact, innovation and scale.

For instance, you might use prompts to look at a project idea from the perspective of the various beneficiaries and stakeholders. Or use prompts to solicit constructive feedback on the strengths and weakness of your project idea.

Stage 3 - Presentation Coaching

Stage 3 applicants that are invited to present on their projects to the Dream Fund judges will be offered support in the form of a daylong presentation coaching session.

Applicants will be provided with support from specialist consultants to develop, tailor and rehearse their presentation to give them the best chance of being successful and impressing the Dream Fund Assessment Panel.

What we will fund



All applications must come from at least two organisations who have are collaborating to develop the project. One of these **MUST** be a registered charity.

We are flexible on who the other partners can be. They can be other charities, companies, universities, local authorities or research institutes.

All projects must have been developed to a point where they are ready to begin delivery within 4 weeks of receiving notification of a successful application. This can include being ready to hire staff and formally plan the project.

All ideas must be innovative and original and show a clear charitable purpose.

Universities and further education institutions are eligible to apply as partner organisations

General running costs including ongoing staff costs, utility bills, council tax, rent and insurance etc. that are directly linked with the project are eligible for funding, costs relating to PR and communications and capital costs are eligible for funding.

All applications must come from organisations based in Scotland, England, Wales or Northern Ireland for projects to be run in one or more of these regions.

Organisations who have previously applied for or received funding from Postcode Dream Fund are eligible to apply

What we will not fund



Projects that run for longer than 5 years (i.e. all funds must be spent within 5 years, but we expect there to be a long-term legacy once the project ends).

Applications where the lead partner has an income that is below £5,000,000.

Applicants can request the £5 million award to contribute toward a larger project, providing they can confirm the source(s) of the remaining funding.

Applications where the lead organisation is not a registered charity.

Applications from individuals, projects or bodies that distribute funds to individuals.

Projects that are a continuation of previous work or involve a replication of services.

Projects that take place internationally.

Projects involving pure medical research.

Routine building development or refurbishment projects.

Current recipients of funding from the Dream Fund are not eligible to apply, this includes partner organisations

Applications that do not include at least 5% of their total project cost for comms and PR.

Organisations cannot submit more than two expressions of interest, either as a lead or partner.

Any questions?

If your query is still unanswered,
please contact the Dream Fund Helpdesk on
info@postcodedreamfund.org.uk

Thank you and good luck!

