

Macmillan **CARE** Grants Programme

Culture • Agency • Respect • Equity

Application Form Guidance

Table of Contents

Before you start	2
Check your eligibility.....	2
Application support	2
Tips for a strong application.....	3
What happens next.....	3
Section-by-section guidance.....	4
Section 1: Contact details	4
Section 2: About your organisation	4
Section 3: Project overview.....	7
Section 4: Project Proposal.....	9
Section 5: Project budget and organisational finance	13
Assessment criteria	14
Timeline.....	14
Final checks before submitting.....	15
Still have questions?.....	15

Before you start

Thank you for your interest in the CARE Grants Programme. We recognise that preparing funding applications takes significant time and effort, and we're committed to making this process as accessible and straightforward as possible. This guidance will walk you through each section of the application form.

Check your eligibility

Save time by confirming you're eligible before starting your application. Our quick eligibility checker will help confirm whether this programme is right for you and your organisation: <https://forms.office.com/e/27teXFs3c6>

Not eligible this time? We may have other funding opportunities. Visit <https://www.macmillan.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/macmillan-funding-grants> to find out more.

Application support

We want everyone who wants to apply to be able to, regardless of how they communicate or access information.

If you need further support, please submit a Support Request form:

<https://forms.office.com/e/712FeP2Skn>

or contact us at CommunityGrants@macmillan.org.uk - we'll do our best to help.

Important: Please read before starting

The application form is long and detailed (over 60 questions).

We do not expect or recommend that anyone completes it directly online in one go. This is because the online form does not automatically save your progress. If you close your browser or lose your internet connection, any unsubmitted work will be lost.

To make the process easier:

1. Download the Word version first (linked on the webpage/Applicant Info Pack)
2. Complete it offline - Take your time, save as you go
3. Copy and paste into the online form when you're ready to submit:
<https://forms.office.com/e/2FhEnGS9Pe>

Tips for a strong application

Be clear and direct

Write as if explaining your ideas to someone unfamiliar with your work. Avoid jargon where possible, and if you must use technical terms, explain what they mean.

Use plain, everyday language

You don't need to fill the entire word limit, focus on being clear and concise.

Show what you mean

Instead of simply saying "we have strong community links" give a short example to bring this to life. For example: "We've worked with the Bangladeshi community in Tower Hamlets for 12 years."

Focus on what matters for this programme

We're interested in your ideas and impact, not your writing style. Make sure your application clearly addresses:

- One or more of the three programme themes
- How communities most affected will shape your work
- What will actually change for people living with cancer

Be honest about challenges

Every project faces risks. It's helpful for us to understand what these might be and how you plan to address them.

Answer the question being asked

Take a moment to read each question carefully. For example, if we ask how, explain your approach. If we ask why, share your reasoning.

What happens next

After you submit:

- You'll receive automatic acknowledgement of your application within 24 hours
- During assessment (26 January – 27 February 2026) we may contact you for clarification or additional information. Please ensure someone relevant from your organisation can respond to queries during this period
- We aim to communicate decisions within 6 weeks
- If you're shortlisted, we'll ask for additional documents including: governing document, most recent annual accounts, safeguarding policy, and bank details

- If you're successful, you'll receive: a formal grant offer letter, grant agreement contract, information about monitoring requirements, details of the peer support programme, and an invitation to meet your Macmillan Contact

Section-by-section guidance

This guidance follows the structure of the application form and walks you through every question. It explains what we're asking along with examples, where relevant, of a potential strong answer.

Question numbers in this guidance follow the full application form, including all possible branching questions. You may not need to answer every question listed, only those relevant to your organisation or project.

Section 1: Contact details

This section covers the primary contact person for this application and grant management.

Questions 1–4 - Main contact information

What we're asking: Who should we contact about this application?

What we're looking for:

- Someone who knows the project well and can answer questions
- Ideally available during assessment (26 Jan - 27 Feb 2026)
- Will manage all grant communications

Tip: Double-check email addresses and phone numbers. If your main contact will be away, provide an alternative.

Section 2: About your organisation

This section covers your organisation's background, structure, and the communities you serve.

Questions 5–13 - Basic organisation details

These are straightforward factual questions. Make sure the details match your official records (Charity Commission, Companies House, etc.)

Question 14 - Which communities does your organisation primarily serve?

This question asks you to identify the communities that make up the largest proportion of the people your organisation works with. Select all that apply, but please be realistic. If your organisation mainly works with one community, focus on that rather than selecting every option. We value honesty and clarity about where your work has the most impact.

Question 15 - Organisation purpose and main activities

This is your organisations work in a nutshell, we're looking for:

- Your mission in plain language
- Clear explanation of your main activities
- Work relevant to this grant application
- How you make a difference

Example: "Birmingham Elders Network supports older people from African and Caribbean communities to live well with long-term health conditions. We run weekly peer support groups, provide advocacy support for health appointments, and deliver culturally tailored health education workshops. We were founded in 2010 by community members who saw that older Black people in Handsworth were struggling to navigate health services and feeling isolated. We work with around 200 people annually, with 85% reporting increased confidence in managing their health."

Questions 16–19 - Staffing and governance

Be accurate. For example, if someone works 21 hours a week, count them as part-time. These questions help us understand your capacity and whether you have appropriate governance in place for the grant size you're requesting.

Question 20 - Lived experience in leadership

We welcome applications from all eligible organisations.

If lived experience is embedded in your leadership, we'd love to hear how. If not, that's completely fine - there's no "right" answer. We're simply interested in understanding how your organisation connects to and represents the communities you serve.

Please do not include any personal or identifiable details (e.g. specific health conditions, ethnicities, or other protected characteristics). We're looking for an overview of your organisation's approach, not information about individuals.

You might consider:

- Who is on your board of trustees or steering group?
- Who is in senior management positions?
- How do people with lived experience shape your strategy, priorities, or activities?

Example: "Out of our 11 trustees, six bring lived experience: three have been diagnosed with cancer, two more supported a close family member through treatment, and one trustee identifies as a disabled person whose lived experience shapes our accessibility agenda."

Questions 21–26 - Safeguarding and risk assessment

These questions help us understand how your organisation is run, your safeguarding practices, and any support you might need. Everyone is asked the same questions; they're not intended to catch anyone out.

If you're still developing something, such as a full safeguarding policy, just let us know your current progress and timeline. Honest, transparent answers are what we value most.

Questions 21-22 – Background checks

Do you carry out background checks (e.g., references, ID, criminal record) for staff, volunteers, or contractors, particularly those working with children or vulnerable adults? If not fully, explain:

- What is in place
- Any plans to introduce checks
- How safety is maintained without them

Questions 23-24 – Safeguarding policy

Includes:

- Health and safety policies and procedures
- Annual safeguarding training for staff and volunteers
- Monitoring of service providers, staff, and volunteers

If incomplete, explain:

- Which parts exist
- Plans to add missing parts
- When full safeguarding measures will be in place
- Whether you would like support

Questions 25-26 – Safeguarding incidents

If yes, explain what happened, how it was handled, and what you learned. Properly reported incidents are not a red flag, they show your systems work.

Questions 27-28 – Criminal convictions or investigations

We ask this question to understand whether anyone involved in running or managing your organisation has ever been convicted of, or is currently under investigation for, serious criminal activity.

Answer honestly. Saying "yes" will not automatically stop your application. If the answer is yes, briefly explain what happened and any steps your organisation has taken to manage risks. Only include offences that are relevant to the running of your organisation.

Question 29 – Organisational policies

Which policies does your organisation have? Select all that apply. It's fine if not all exist, just be honest.

Questions 30-31 – Governance risks and mitigation plan

Are there current or foreseeable governance or leadership risks in the next 6 months that could affect delivery? For example: board issues, key staff leaving, decision-making processes.

If yes, please describe your mitigation plan. We are looking for evidence that potential risks have been considered and that you have a plan to manage them.

Section 3: Project overview

This section covers the essential details of your proposed project.

Question 32 - Project title

Keep it clear and descriptive. A good title gives us an immediate sense of what your project is about.

Questions 33-34 - Start date and duration

Be realistic about timings. Consider:

- How long will recruitment take if you need new staff?
- Do you need to establish partnerships first?
- Are there busy periods when delivery would be difficult?

Questions 35-36 - Geographic scope and location

Question 35 - Choose the option that best describes your project's reach:

- Local: Single area or community (e.g. Bradford)
- Regional: Multiple areas (e.g. West Yorkshire)
- National: Across England, Scotland, Wales and/or Northern Ireland

Question 36 - Be specific. Rather than "London", say "Newham and Tower Hamlets" or "South London boroughs".

Question 37 - Project summary

This is your brief and simple version of your project proposal. Imagine explaining your project to someone at a bus stop – what are the essentials?

A strong summary includes:

- What you'll do (activities)
- Who you'll work with (target groups/partners)
- Why it matters (the problem you're addressing)
- What you hope will change (outcomes)

Example: "We will deliver a 'Cultural Bridges' programme, training healthcare professionals in Leicester to provide culturally responsive cancer care to Gujarati-speaking communities. Through 12 workshops co-designed with community members, 100 clinical staff will learn about cultural health beliefs, communication approaches, and how to address specific barriers our community faces. We'll pair training with a reverse mentoring scheme where 15 Gujarati community members share their lived experiences directly with healthcare teams. We expect this to result in healthcare staff feeling more confident, patients feeling more respected and involved, and ultimately better cancer care experiences for Gujarati people in Leicester."

Question 38 - Which theme(s) are you applying under?

The three themes are:

1. Cultural Responsiveness Interventions
2. Dementia Friendly Cancer Care
3. Consistency and Best Practice in Shared Decision Making

You can select one, two, or all three themes. However, addressing multiple themes won't make your application stronger than a tightly focused project addressing one theme well.

Choose the theme(s) your project most directly addresses. Don't stretch your project to fit multiple themes if the connection isn't genuine. See the Applicant Information Pack on the webpage for detailed explanations of each theme.

Question 39 - How your project addresses the theme(s)

This question asks you to demonstrate your understanding of the theme and explain how your project will make a difference.

Structure your answer around:

1. The specific problem within the theme - Show you understand the issue. Use evidence if you have it – local data, research findings, stories from your community.

Example: "In our community conversations, Gujarati women told us they often don't understand medical terminology, feel rushed in appointments, and worry about being seen as 'difficult' if they ask questions. Healthcare staff we spoke with want to provide better support but don't know how cultural factors affect communication."

2. Your approach and why it will work - Explain what you'll do and your rationale. Why have you chosen this approach?

Example: "We're combining two approaches because training alone rarely changes practice. First, structured workshops will give staff practical tools – not just cultural awareness but specific communication strategies. Second, reverse mentoring creates ongoing relationships where staff learn directly from community members in a less formal setting. By co-designing content with Gujarati community members, we ensure training addresses real barriers rather than stereotypes."

3. Expected impact - What will be different as a result? Be realistic and specific.

Example: "We expect healthcare staff will feel more confident having conversations about treatment options with Gujarati patients, using communication approaches that work better for our community."

Question 40-41 – Insurance

If you need insurance but don't have it yet, explain what type you need and confirm grant funding can cover it.

If you're not sure what insurance you need, say so – we can discuss this if your application is shortlisted.

Section 4: Project Proposal

This section covers your project design, delivery approach, partnerships, and expected outcomes. This is the heart of your application. Take your time with this section.

Question 42 - New or extension project?

Is this project an extension or expansion of something you're already doing?

If extending existing work, you'll need to explain (in Question 37) what's already working and why expansion makes sense.

Question 43 - What you will do

Tell us what you will do during your project. List your main activities and tell us why you've chosen this approach.

Structure your answer by describing:

- What you'll do - List your main activities. For each one, briefly explain what it involves.
- How you'll deliver - Explain your delivery methods and practical arrangements.
- Why you've chosen this approach - Explain your rationale. What evidence or experience suggests this will work?

Tips:

- Be specific about numbers, timings, frequency
- Explain decisions (Why this venue? Why this group size? Why this duration?)
- Show you've thought about what makes activities accessible and inclusive
- Mention if you're building on evidence, previous experience, or established models

Questions 44-45 – Partnerships

We want to know if your project involves other organisations and what role they will play. Even informal partnerships are useful to describe, explain who is involved, what they will contribute, and how you will work together. This helps show that roles and responsibilities are clear and that the project can be delivered successfully.

If you are working with partners, tell us for each one:

- The organisation's name and what they will do in the project
- What resources, expertise, or support they will provide
- Whether a formal agreement (e.g., contract or letter of support) is in place or planned

You do not need to provide lengthy details. A few clear sentences for each partner is enough.

Example: Leicester Royal Infirmary NHS Trust – host organisation and primary delivery partner

What they'll contribute: The Trust will provide free venue space for training; promote sessions to clinical staff; grant us access to staff during working hours; allocate a senior staff champion to support engagement. Their Education Lead will sit on our project steering group.

Agreement: We have a letter of support from the Trust and are in discussion about a partnership agreement to be signed before project start.

Tips:

- Be honest about your partnerships. A genuine, informal connection is better than overstating links that aren't really there.
- Highlight mutual benefits. Explain what your partner will gain from the collaboration.
- If partnerships are still in progress, outline your plan and timeline for developing them.

Question 46 - Risks and mitigation

Every project faces risks. Identifying them and having mitigation plans shows good project management.

Common risks to consider:

- Recruitment risks

Example: "If we can't recruit a Project Coordinator by Month 2, existing staff will cover core delivery while recruitment continues. We've allowed a recruitment contingency period of 3 months."

- Partner engagement risks

Example: "If NHS staff engagement is lower than hoped, we'll: work with our Trust champion to identify barriers; offer more flexible timing; explore incentives like CPD accreditation; have a backup plan to deliver training in community venues and invite NHS staff to attend there."

- Capacity risks

Example: "If community members don't want to be reverse mentors, we'll expand recruitment through our existing networks and offer more flexible formats (e.g. group discussions rather than one-to-one if preferred)."

Tips:

- Be realistic - focus on key risks, not every possible challenge.
- Explain how you'll manage each risk.
- For new approaches, it's okay to say you'll learn and adapt as you go.
- Show you have flexible backup plans.

Question 47 – Expected changes

Think about changes at three levels:

- For Individuals

Example: "Healthcare staff will feel more confident communicating with Gujarati patients about treatment options and more aware of cultural factors that affect care." "Gujarati patients will feel more respected, better understood, and more able to participate in decisions about their care."

- For Services/Systems

Example: "The Trust will have a cohort of culturally responsive staff who can support colleagues and champion good practice."

- For Communities

Example: "There will be increased trust between the Gujarati community and local cancer services."

Question 48 - How many people

- Direct beneficiaries: People who directly participate in your project activities.
- Indirect beneficiaries: People who benefit because of changes your project creates, even though they don't directly participate.

Example:

Direct beneficiaries - 100 healthcare professionals who attend training workshops, 15 Gujarati community members participating as reverse mentors

Indirect beneficiaries: Approximately 500 Gujarati patients receiving cancer care at Leicester Royal Infirmary each year, Healthcare staff not directly trained but who learn from colleagues

Question 49 - What you want to learn

Structure your answer around:

- What you'll measure - List 3-5 key things you'll track. These should connect to the changes you described in Question 41.

Example: We'll measure healthcare staff confidence in providing culturally responsive care (before and after training)

- How you'll measure it - For each measure, explain your method.

Example: Pre and post-training surveys using a validated confidence scale, plus 3-month follow-up survey

- How you'll use learning - Explain how you'll use what you learn to improve your work and share with others. We value contribution over attribution. You don't need to prove your project caused every outcome, just that it contributed to change. We welcome evidence of all kinds, including stories and lived experience.

Budget note: Include evaluation costs in your budget (3-10% of total project costs).

Question 50- Lived experience in design and delivery

This is crucial, we're looking for genuine co-design and co-production. If you are still developing your participation approach, please describe your current plans along with your ambitions.

- Lived experience in project design - How did people with lived experience shape what your project will do?

Example: "This project was designed through 6 months of community conversations with 35 Gujarati people who've experienced cancer care. They told us the specific communication challenges they face and what would actually help. Rather than us

deciding training content and inviting community members to 'review' it, we gave the Lived Experience Design Group full control over identifying priorities."

- Lived experience in project delivery - How will people with lived experience be involved in making the project happen?

Example: "Community members with lived experience will co-facilitate all training workshops (paid role, £200 per workshop)"

- Decision-making power - Be honest about how much power and influence people with lived experience have.

Example: "Lived experience members on the steering group have equal decision-making power to organisational representatives – we operate by consensus."

Question 51 - Why you're the right organisation

This question asks you to demonstrate your credibility and capability to deliver this work.

Please address elements such as:

- What experience does your organisation have that's relevant to this project?
- Why do the communities you serve trust you?
- What skills and knowledge do your team bring?
- What relationships help you deliver this work?

Example: "We've worked with Gujarati communities in Leicester for 12 years, building deep trust and understanding. We've delivered health education programmes on diabetes, mental health, and cardiac care, reaching 500+ people annually. In 2023, we piloted cultural responsiveness training with one GP practice, receiving excellent feedback. While we haven't specifically worked on cancer before, our approach to health inequalities and cultural competency training transfers directly."

Question 52- Timeline

Please provide a clear, outline of your project's key activities and milestones. The timeline should show how your project will progress from start to finish, including planning, delivery, evaluation, and reporting phases.

Example:

- Months 1-3: Recruitment of Project Coordinator; Co-design workshops with community members; Partnership agreements finalised
- Months 4-6: First round of training workshops delivered; Reverse mentoring pairs established
- Months 7-12: Ongoing training delivery; Reverse mentoring programme; Interim evaluation
- Months 13-18: Final training delivery; Complete reverse mentoring; Final evaluation and report

Question 53 - Personal data

This is a Yes/No question about data protection compliance and whether data-sharing agreements need to be in place. It asks whether any personal data will be shared with Macmillan as part of your grant-funded project.

Personal data means any information that can identify an individual, either directly or indirectly.

Examples include:

- Names, contact details, or staff information
- Demographic data such as age, ethnicity, gender, or disability
- Health-related information (e.g., cancer type, treatment, or experience)

Section 5: Project budget and organisational finance

This section covers your project costs, funding sources, and your organisation's financial systems and capacity.

Questions 54-57 - We want to understand the total cost of your project, including any funding beyond the Macmillan CARE grant (£50,000–£150,000). If you are relying on other funding sources, tell us whether this money is confirmed, secured, or still being applied for.

Questions 58 - Please download and complete the Budget Template and email to CommunityGrants@macmillan.org.uk
Ideally around the same time as submitting your online form.

Budget template should include:

- Staff cost – Note if posts are new recruitment or existing staff
- Project delivery costs – for example:
 - Training delivery: Venue hire, refreshments, materials
 - Community member payments: Co-facilitators, reverse mentors, design group participants
 - Resources: Printing, translation, equipment
 - Travel and expenses
 - Evaluation costs: Data collection, analysis, report design
- Overheads (up to 15%) - Your organisation's core costs that support the project. Such as rent, utilities, management time, HR, finance support, IT systems

Budget Tips:

- Be realistic about costs.
- Include inflation if your project runs across 2 years
- Justify significant costs in the Budget Narrative
- Include contingency for unexpected costs
- Include evaluation costs (3-10% of total budget)

Questions 59-62 - Financial systems and capacity

These questions help us understand your financial management capacity.

Question 62 - What systems do you use to record and audit your spending, and how do they suit this project and the amount of money you're applying for?

Example: "We use Xero accounting software with dual authorisation for all payments over £500. We have clear separation of duties between staff who authorise spending and those who process payments. For this project, we'll set up a dedicated cost code to track all CARE Grant expenditure separately, with monthly budget monitoring reports to the Project Coordinator and quarterly reports to trustees."

Question 63 – This free text box provides space for any further comments or information you wish to share that may strengthen or clarify your application.

Assessment criteria

Your application will be scored against six criteria:

Criterion	Weight	Key questions to answer well
Project Design and Feasibility	30%	Questions 37, 39, 43, 52 (summary, themes, activities, timeline)
Designed from the Margins	20%	Questions 20, 50 (lived experience in leadership and project)
Strong Leadership and Partnerships	20%	Questions 44-45, 49, 51 (partnerships, learning, why you)
Ability to Create Change	20%	Questions 47, 51 (expected changes, systemic impact)
Value for Money	10%	Budget template and question 62 (financial systems)

Timeline

- **Programme opens:** Friday 14 November 2025
- **Application deadline:** 5pm Friday 23 January 2026
- **Assessment period:** 26 January – 27 February 2026
- **Decisions announced:** Week commencing 9 March 2026

During assessment, we may contact you to clarify any aspect of your application. Please ensure someone from your organisation is available to respond to queries between 26 January and 27 February 2026.

Final checks before submitting

Have you:

- ✓ Checked your eligibility using the online checker?
- ✓ Read the Information Pack and understood the three themes?
- ✓ Answered all required questions?
- ✓ Completed the budget template and emailed it to CommunityGrants@macmillan.org.uk?
- ✓ Checked all dates, numbers and organisation details are accurate?
- ✓ Saved a copy of your completed application for your records?
- ✓ Ensured your main contact will be available during the assessment period?

Still have questions?

We're here to help. Don't let uncertainty stop you from applying.

Support form: <https://forms.office.com/e/712FeP2Skn>

Email: CommunityGrants@macmillan.org.uk

We'll respond within 5 working days

Thank you for your application

We recognise that preparing funding applications requires significant time and effort, and we appreciate and value the vital work you're doing in your community.

Please remember to email the completed budget template upon submitting your application to CommunityGrants@macmillan.org.uk

Macmillan CARE Grants Programme

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