

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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General

What is the Collaboration for Better Cancer Care Grant?

The Collaboration for Better Cancer Care Grant is a new funding programme from Macmillan Cancer Support. It aims to help local partnerships implement ideas that improve cancer care by bringing organisations and communities together to address local challenges.

The fund is designed to support more joined-up, equitable and community-informed cancer care closer to home.

Why is Macmillan launching this grant?

Lasting improvements in cancer care require organisations and communities to work together around shared local challenges” feels slightly corporate. I'd use the stronger narrative language, something like:

People living with cancer often need support from many different places, including the NHS, local authorities and community organisations. But these services don't always work together, which can leave people navigating complex systems and experiencing gaps in their care. We know better cancer care can't be delivered by one organisation alone, so the grant will support local organisations and communities to work together to improve care in their area

What types of projects is the grant intended to support?

We are looking for partnership-led initiatives that:

- Respond to a clearly evidenced local cancer care need
 - Bring organisations together to address challenges that cannot be solved by a single organisation alone
 - Have been shaped by local communities and people with lived experience
 - Improve access to cancer care and support
 - Help bring care closer to home
 - Improve experiences and outcomes for people facing the greatest barriers, inequalities or unmet needs
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Does my project need to be innovative?

Not necessarily. We're not looking for innovation for innovation's sake. We're interested in developed ideas that respond to a clear local need and are ready to be put into action and tested. This could be a new approach or an evolution of an existing idea, as long as the activity being funded is not already in delivery.

Can this grant be used to support an element of prevention work?

Pre-diagnosis activities (screening, early detection) are outside the scope of this programme as the focus is on post-diagnosis care.

Eligibility

Who can apply?

Applications can be submitted by eligible organisations based in the UK or Isle of Man, including:

- Voluntary, community, faith or social enterprise (VCFSE) organisation based in the UK, including:
 - Registered charities
 - Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)
 - Community Interest Company (CIC)
 - Company Limited by Guarantee
 - Faith-based organisation
- Public sector health organisations like NHS bodies in England, NHS Wales Health Boards and Trusts, NHS Scotland Boards, and Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts in Northern Ireland, Cancer Networks, Cancer Alliances, NHS Territorial Boards, Integration Joint Boards, Managed Clinical Networks, Integrated Care Boards
- Local Authorities or Local government body
- Another eligible organisation involved in delivering health, care or community support.

Who cannot apply?

The grant cannot support:

- unincorporated groups
- unregistered charities, CIOs or CICs
- universities and higher education institutions
- individual healthcare professionals
- sole traders
- commercial businesses
- private or public limited companies
- organisations without a partnership-led initiative

What are the eligibility criteria?

- Your organisation is eligible for the grant and a registered body in the UK.
- Host organization has current published accounts income above 50% of total requested grant amount. The Host will be responsible for undertaking appropriate financial due diligence and risk assessment of all sub-grantee partners.
- Host organization must have free reserves of a minimum of 3 months.
- This funding is towards a new project or an evolution of an existing idea.
- Requested fund cover 100% of the anticipated total initiative cost for the duration of the grant period and you will not require third party funding during the grant period.
- Host Organisation have, or will have access to appropriate financial management, governance and assurance processes to manage this grant responsibly.
- Host Organisation has identified at least one partner (minimum one voluntary, community, faith or social enterprise organisation) that has agreed to actively collaborate in developing and delivering the proposed project.
- Your proposed initiative avoid all activities listed as ineligible here- party political activity; promotion of religion or religious worship; activities where the primary purpose is academic research; grant-making to third parties; retrospective funding; statutory activities
- You are not seeking funding for an initiative or activities that replicates, duplicates or mirrors an initiative currently being funded by Macmillan or have been funded within the last 12 months. Organisations may hold more than one Macmillan grant, provided each grant supports a separate and distinct initiative.

Is the grant available across the UK?

Yes. The grant is open to eligible organisations and partnerships across the United Kingdom and the Isle of Man.

Do I need to apply as part of a partnership?

Yes. This fund is specifically designed to support collaboration. Applicants must have identified at least one partner organisation (minimum one voluntary, community, faith, or

social enterprise organisation), that has agreed to actively collaborate in the development and delivery of the proposed initiative.

How many partners are required?

Applicants must have at least one active delivery partner. There is no stated maximum number of partners.

We encourage applications that bring together organisations with complementary skills, expertise, and relationships relevant to the local challenge being addressed.

Do all partners need to be from different sectors?

No. However, successful initiatives should demonstrate why partnership working is necessary and how each partner contributes to addressing the identified challenge.

Partnerships involving health services, local authorities, community organisations, and people with lived experience may be particularly well placed to deliver joined-up solutions.

What makes a strong partnership?

Strong partnerships are likely to demonstrate:

- Collaboration with minimum one voluntary, community, faith or social enterprise organisation
 - A shared understanding of a local cancer care challenge.
 - Clear roles and responsibilities.
 - Commitment from all partners.
 - Meaningful community involvement.
 - The ability to deliver and learn together.
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What is an established partnership?

Two or more organisations having a proven track record of working together towards a shared goal, with clear roles and responsibilities and each partner actively contributing to the work.

Why is lived experience important?

People living with cancer and local communities should have a meaningful role in shaping the care they receive. We want partnerships to involve people with lived experience in understanding the local challenge and developing the proposed approach, particularly people who face the greatest barriers to care

What level of community involvement is expected?

Applicants should demonstrate that communities and people with lived experience have helped identify the challenge and shape the proposed solution.

We encourage ongoing involvement throughout the life of the initiative, not just during application development.

Which communities should we engage?

We are particularly interested in initiatives that involve people who experience the greatest barriers, inequalities or unmet need in cancer care and support. The specific groups will depend on your local context and evidence.

Funding

How much funding is available?

Grants of between £100,000 and £550,000 are available.

How long can projects run for?

Funding is available for initiatives lasting between one and three years.

Can we apply for evaluation funding?

Yes. Applicants are expected to plan for evaluation to understand the difference your initiative is making and what you are learning along the way. Funding for evaluation is available through the grant programme, with up to 10% of initiative cost (maximum amount £50,000) to support these activities.

Can funding be shared between partners?

Yes. The host organisation will be responsible for managing the grant, including financial oversight and any funding arrangements involving delivery partners.

Appropriate governance and due diligence arrangements must be in place.

What does "flexible funding" mean?

Flexible funding means local partnerships have flexibility to propose approaches to their local cancer care needs. Rather than requiring every partnership to deliver the same predetermined solution, partnerships can design and adapt their approach around local priorities, opportunities and challenges, and where they believe the funding can make the greatest difference.

Can we apply for an existing service?

No. Funding must support a new initiative or the development and evolution of an existing idea.

The fund cannot support projects already in delivery or cover costs already incurred.

Do projects need to focus on cancer?

Yes. Proposed initiatives must address a cancer care challenge and demonstrate how they will improve care, support, access, or outcomes for people affected by cancer.

What activities are not eligible?

The grant cannot support:

- party political activity
 - promotion of religion or worship
 - activities primarily focused on academic research
 - grant-making to third parties
 - retrospective funding
 - statutory activities
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What are assessors looking for?

Eligible Expressions of Interest will be assessed against five areas, with indicated weighting:

1. Local Need (25%) - Assess whether the application presents a clear, locally evidenced cancer care need and demonstrates why it requires a partnership response.
 2. Proposed Approach (20%) - Assess whether the proposed approach is a logical response to the identified need and has been informed by local knowledge, community insight, and lived experience.
 3. Partnership (25%) - Assess whether the proposal demonstrates genuine partnership working, with all partners actively collaborating and adding distinct value.
 4. Intended Impact (20%) - Assess whether the proposal clearly explains the difference it hopes to make and how people experiencing the greatest barriers will help shape that change.
 5. Learning (10%) - Assess whether the proposal demonstrates a clear commitment to testing, learning, and sharing insights that could improve future cancer care.
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What evidence should we provide?

Applicants should use local evidence, community insight, and lived experience to explain the challenge they want to address. Applications should not rely solely on national statistics.

Will stronger applications clearly demonstrate a local need?

Yes. We expect applicants to show a clear understanding of who is affected, why the issue matters locally and how they have engaged communities in shaping their proposal.

What outcomes is the grant aiming to achieve?

The grant aims to help:

- Local organisations work together more effectively.
 - Make cancer care more joined-up and easier to navigate.
 - Ensure solutions are shaped by local communities and lived experience.
 - Improve care and support for people who face the greatest barriers.
 - Build our understanding of what helps locally led partnerships succeed.
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What does "care closer to home" mean?

This refers to approaches that make support easier to access within communities and neighbourhoods, reducing barriers and improving people's experience of care.

The specific approach will vary according to local needs and circumstances.

Will successful projects be expected to evaluate and share learning?

Yes. Learning is a central part of the grant. Learning is a central part of the grant. Alongside improving cancer care locally, we want to understand what helps partnerships succeed, what gets in the way and what support or investment could make the greatest difference in future.

When can I apply?

Current planned dates are:

- Grant webpage live: 01 September 2026
 - Expression of Interest opens: 07 September 2026
 - Expression of Interest closes: 20 September 2026
 - Stage 1 outcome notification: Late September/early October 2026
 - Full application stage: 05 October- 02 November 2026
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Could the Expression of Interest close early?

Yes. Macmillan may close the Expression of Interest stage earlier than planned if a very high volume of applications is received.

Applicants are encouraged to apply as early as possible.

Can I use AI to help write my application?

Yes. Applicants may use AI tools to support drafting. However, applicants remain responsible for ensuring all information submitted accurately reflects their organisation, partnership and local circumstances and does not contain misleading or fabricated information.

Who can I contact if I need support?

If you need help completing your Expression of Interest, or need this information in a different format, please contact us at: BetterCancerCareTeam@macmillan.org.uk
