

McCarthy Stone Foundation



Festive Connections Grants Programme 2025



Guidance for Applicants

We're pleased to announce that the McCarthy Stone Foundation is awarding grants of up to £750 to support over 30 charitable organisations to provide festive celebrations for the over 65's in the most deprived parts of the country.

December can be a difficult time of year for so many older people who might not be surrounded by family and friends. We are looking to fund initiatives that will help to provide some social connection or let people know they are not forgotten about during the festive period.

Please read this Grant Guidance before applying for funding and check that you are eligible. We don't want to waste your valuable time.

Key Dates & Timescales

Please refer to the **Timescales** section for detailed information on application deadlines and other important dates.

We know that applying for funding can often feel time-consuming and challenging, so we've worked hard to simplify the process, reduce paperwork, and ensure an efficient turnaround.

To make the process easier for both you and us, we've put together some simple guidance below. Please take a moment to review it, and feel free to reach out if you have any further questions.

Are you eligible?

- a. You ***must*** be a registered charity, community group with constitution or Community Interest Company working in England, Scotland or Wales with a turnover under £250,000 p.a. as evidenced in your recent annual report. We also consider exempt charities, but do not make grants to individuals. If you are a CIC, you must be limited by guarantee, and you cannot apply for core cost funding.
- b. You ***must*** be providing an activity/event that will provide connection and engagement for people over 65 during the Christmas period. For this programme, *we are only considering applications for activities taking place between 1st December 2025 – 2nd January 2026.*
- c. You ***should*** be working in an area of deprivation affecting older people. While we will consider applications from all areas in England, Wales and Scotland, evidencing a high level of local need is important as part of your application. When all else is equal, priority will be given to those applications working in

McCarthy Stone

Foundation

more deprived areas. **See appendix a. for areas with the highest levels of deprivation affecting older people.**

If you can answer YES to the above, then we would love to see an application from you. To do that you will need to complete our online application, which can be found [here](#). Applications open on 10th September and close on 3rd October.

[Application Form - McCarthy Stone Foundation](#)

- a. Most of the questions are self-explanatory, but please check you have entered your details correctly. We are really conscious that you have a lot of applications to make but if you enter details incorrectly it can result in you not receiving communication from us or your application being rejected due to misunderstanding.
- b. For your address, please use that of your registered office. If you don't have an office, please use your primary postal address. We do not publish addresses in full, only postcodes are used on our grant map. All data for 360 Giving is converted to a geocode format.
- c. Please reference our divisional map to identify your region of operations. You can find a link for this on the application form.
- d. The term 'free reserves' can sometimes be confusing. We define this as your unrestricted funds, minus any tangible fixed assets, programme-related investments or designations. As our funding is relatively small, you must have less than 12 months of running costs in your reserves and a clear reserves policy in place.
- e. We understand you may want to use information from other grant applications, which is absolutely fine, but please don't just cut and paste your governing documents into the answer fields.
- f. Please give us enough information to understand what you do and how our funding would help. Bullet points can really help to present information concisely and clearly. We read hundreds of applications, so it really helps when key information is presented clearly.
- g. Funding for this programme is a maximum of £750 there is no minimum.
- h. Lastly, if you need support with any aspect of the application process, please get in touch. We are a small team (just the two of us), but we will get back to you.

Further information can be found in our Grant Policy, or by contacting our team through the [website](#).

Key Dates and Timescales

- Grant applications open on 10th September, 2025, and close on 3rd October 2025 at 5pm. Please note that we cannot accept applications past this time once shortlisting has commenced.
- Foundation team carries out shortlisting and due diligence.
- Recommendations are agreed by the Trustees before 21st October.
- All applicants informed by 24th October with payments made shortly afterwards. Please note that for applications not shortlisted initially we may contact you sooner.

McCarthy Stone

Foundation

Feedback:

We receive hundreds of applications and so to prioritise communicating outcomes to those who apply to our programmes and to ensure we can turn around funding quickly and efficiently, we do not provide feedback on every application as we unfortunately don't have the resource.

We do recognise that feedback can be useful for future applications, so will, on request, try to provide feedback whenever possible.

Appendix a. Areas of Deprivation Affecting Older People

To help ensure an equitable allocation of funds and to help with selection of grant applicants, we take a place-based approach to reviewing grant applications. Funding will be prioritised to organisations able to demonstrate they are working in specified locations across our six grant-award regions.

Locations have been selected based on data from the ONS, Age UK, and the Centre for Ageing Better, with a key focus on areas where income deprivation and loneliness affecting older people is most acute.

Please check the list and ensure you are operating in these locations prior to applying. These areas are defined by Lower-layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) and you can check if you are in the nominated areas by using the map at this link: [Indices of Deprivation 2015 and 2019 \(communities.gov.uk\)](https://www.communities.gov.uk/deprivation/indices-of-deprivation-2015-and-2019).

The list below indicates the town/nearest town. Please note that we will ask you to supply either a ward/s or town your services cover, applications not including this information will automatically be rejected.

Southern Region:

- Bournemouth and Poole
- Brighton and Hove
- Bristol
- Cornwall
- Exeter
- Havant
- Oxford
- Plymouth
- Portsmouth
- Rushmoor
- Sedgemoor
- Southampton
- Swindon
- Torbay
- Weston Super-mare
- Weymouth and Portland

Midlands Region:

McCarthy Stone

Foundation

- Birmingham
- Boston
- Cannock Chase
- Charnwood
- Cheltenham
- Cherwell
- Coventry
- Derby
- Dudley
- East Lindsey
- East Staffordshire
- East Suffolk/Waveney
- Gloucester
- Great Yarmouth
- Ipswich
- Kettering
- Kings Lynn
- Leicester
- Lincoln
- Luton
- North and North-East Lincolnshire
- Northampton
- Norwich
- Nottingham
- Nuneaton and Bedworth
- Peterborough
- Redditch
- Sandwell
- Solihull
- Stoke on Trent
- Tamworth
- Telford and Wrekin
- Walsall
- Wellingborough
- Wolverhampton
- Worcester
- Wyre Forest

London and South-East Region:

- Ashford
- Aylesbury Vale
- Barking and Dagenham
- Barnet
- Basildon
- Bedford
- Bexley
- Brent
- Bromley
- Broxbourne
- Camden
- Colchester *
- Croydon
- Dover
- Ealing
- Eastbourne *
- Enfield
- Folkestone and Hythe
- Gravesham
- Greenwich
- Hackney
- Hammersmith and Fulham
- Haringey
- Harrow
- Hastings
- Havering
- Hertsmere
- Hillingdon
- Hounslow
- Islington
- Kensington and Chelsea
- Kingston upon Thames
- Lambeth
- Lewisham
- Medway
- Merton
- Milton Keynes
- Newham
- Reading
- Redbridge

McCarthy Stone

Foundation

- Slough
- Southend on Sea
- Southwark
- Sutton
- Swale
- Tendring
- Thanet
- Thurrock
- Tower Hamlets
- Waltham Forest
- Wandsworth
- Westminster
- Windsor and Maidenhead
- Woking
- Wycombe

Northern Region:

- Ashfield
- Barnsley
- Barrow in Furness
- Bassetlaw
- Blackburn with Darwen
- Blackpool
- Bolton
- Bradford
- Burnley
- Bury
- Calderdale
- Cheshire West and Chester
- County Durham
- Darlington
- Doncaster
- East Riding of Yorkshire
- Gateshead
- Halton
- Hartlepool
- High Peak
- Hyndburn
- Kingston upon Hull
- Kirklees
- Knowsley
- Lancaster
- Leeds
- Liverpool
- Manchester
- Mansfield
- Middlesbrough
- Newcastle upon Tyne
- North Tyneside
- Northumberland
- Oldham
- Pendle
- Preston
- Redcar and Cleveland
- Rochdale
- Rotherham
- Salford
- Scarborough
- Sefton
- Sheffield
- South Ribble
- South Tyneside
- St Helens
- Stockport
- Stockton on Tees
- Sunderland
- Tameside
- Trafford
- Wakefield
- Warrington
- West Lancashire
- Wigan
- Wirral
- Workington – Moss Bay
- Wyre
- York

McCarthy Stone Foundation

Wales:

- Abercynon
- Aberteifi/Cardigan
- Bridgend
- Cardiff
- Cwn Clydach
- Darren Valley
- Ebbw Vale
- Newport
- Gilfach Goch
- Glyncoch
- Gurnos
- Hirwaun
- Holywell Central
- Maerdy
- Merthyr Vale
- Moriah
- Nantyglo
- Peblig (Caernarfon)
- Pen-y-graig
- Pen-y-waun
- Rhydyfelin
- Rhyl West
- Sealand
- Swansea
- Tredegar Central and West
- Treherbert
- Tylorstown
- Ynshir
- Ystrad

Data source: <https://datamap.gov.wales/maps/welsh-index-of-multiple-deprivation-wimd-2019/view#/>

Scotland:

Please note that funding available for Scotland is very limited and only available to organisations working in the following areas:

- Alloa South and East
- Altonhill Kilmarnock
- Ayr North Harbour
- Barlanark and Easterhouse
- Bingham, Magdalene and the Christians
- Carntyne West
- Cowlares and Port Dundas
- Craigneuk Wishaw
- Cranhill, Lightburn and Queenslie South
- Dalkeith
- Drumchapel
- Drumry
- Dundee, Linlathen and Midcraigie
- Dundee, The Glens
- Dundee, Whitfield
- Glenwood
- Govan and Linthouse
- Greenock
- Irvine Central and Fullarton
- Keppochill
- Methil
- Motherwell South
- Murrayburn and Wester Hailes North
- Muirhouse Paisley Ferguslie
- Paisley Northwest
- Parkhead
- Pollock
- Port Glasgow
- Possil Park
- Raploch, Stirling

Data Source: https://simd.scot/#/simd2020_5pc/BTTTTFTT/8/-4.1224/56.0093/