

Dementia Grants Programme 2026

Guidance for Applicants

We are pleased to invite applications to the **Dementia Grants Programme 2026**. Through this programme, the Foundation will award grants of **up to £7,500 to more than 20 dementia clubs and memory cafés** across England, Scotland and Wales. These organisations play a vital role in supporting people living with dementia, their carers, and their wider communities.

We know that applying for funding can be time-consuming and, at times, challenging. We have therefore worked hard to simplify our application process, reduce paperwork, and ensure decisions are made as efficiently as possible.

The guidance below is designed to help you decide whether you are eligible and to support you in completing a strong application. If you have any questions at any stage, please get in touch — **we know mistakes happen, and we'll contact you if we need clarification.**

Before you apply – quick checklist

- Are you a registered charity, a constituted community group, or a Community Interest Company (CIC) limited by guarantee?
- Do you work with adults aged 65+ living with dementia and/or their carers?
- Are you able to demonstrate local need, ideally in areas affected by deprivation?
- Can you provide financial information (annual report, latest accounts, or committee-approved financial summary)?

If you can answer yes to all of these, you are eligible to apply.

Key Dates and Timescales

Please refer to the **Key Dates and Timescales** section at the end of this guidance for full details of application deadlines and decision dates.

Eligibility Criteria

a. Organisation type

You must be:

- A registered charity, **or**
- A community group with a constitution, **or**
- A Community Interest Company (CIC) limited by guarantee

You must:

- Be working in **England, Scotland or Wales**
- Have an annual turnover of **under £250,000**

This should normally be evidenced in your most recent annual report. **If you are not required to produce an annual report (for example, if you are a constituted community group or a small CIC), please provide alternative financial evidence such as your latest accounts or a financial summary approved by your management committee.**

We also consider applications from **exempt charities**. We do not make grants to individuals. CICs cannot apply for core cost funding.

b. Beneficiaries

You must be working with **adults aged 65 and over**, providing services that support:

- People living with dementia, and/or
- Their carers

This may include services such as dementia memory cafés, dementia clubs, or carer support courses.

c. Area of need

You should be working in an area where **older people are affected by deprivation**. While we consider applications from across England, Wales and Scotland, it is important that your application clearly evidences **local need**.

Where applications are otherwise of equal strength, priority will be given to organisations working in areas with **higher levels of deprivation affecting older people**.

McCarthy Stone Foundation

Please see **Appendix A** for further information on how we assess deprivation.

Applications must be submitted via our **online application form**, available here after Monday 16th February : [Application Form – McCarthy Stone Foundation](#)

Completing the Application Form

a. Accuracy of information

Please take care to enter all details accurately. **We know mistakes happen, and we'll contact you if we need clarification.**

b. Address details

Please use the address of your **registered office**. If you do not have an office, use your main postal address. Only postcodes are used on our grant map, and all data shared with **360Giving** is converted into geocode format.

c. Region of operation

Please refer to our **divisional map** to identify your region of operation. A link to the map is included within the application form.

d. Free reserves

For this programme, *free reserves* are defined as unrestricted funds, minus any tangible fixed assets, programme-related investments, or designated funds.

- You must have **less than 12 months' running costs** in reserves
- You must have a **clear reserves policy** in place

If your organisation holds **more than 3 months but less than 12 months** of reserves, we will ask to see your reserves policy, which should be included in your annual report or alternative financial evidence.

e. Project funding and core costs

Whether you apply for **project funding** or **core costs** will not affect the outcome. This helps us understand demand and how funding is used.

- *Project funding* covers direct costs of a specific activity.

- *Core costs* cover shared costs across multiple activities.

f. Full cost recovery

If applying for project funding, we encourage **full cost recovery**. Please contact us if you are unfamiliar with this budgeting method.

g. Use of existing material

You may reuse information from other applications, but avoid copying governing documents directly into the answer fields.

h. Clarity of responses

Provide enough detail to explain:

- What your organisation does
- How our funding will make a difference

Bullet points are encouraged to make responses clear and concise.

i. Supporting evidence

You may link to external documents to support your application.

j. Grant amount

- Maximum: **£7,500**
- No minimum

k. Additional documents if shortlisted

- Recent bank statement
- Constitution and/or articles of association (if not a charity)
- Safeguarding policy

l. Support

If you need assistance with any aspect of the application process, please contact us. We are a small team but will respond as quickly as possible.

Further information is available in our **Grant Policy**, or via the contact details on our website.

Key Dates and Timescales

- **Applications open:** Monday 16 February 2026
- **Applications close:** Friday 13 March 2026 at 5.00 pm
(Late applications cannot be accepted once shortlisting begins.)
- Initial shortlisting and due diligence by Foundation team
- **Sub-committee review:** 20 April 2026
- **Trustee decisions agreed:** 30 April 2026
- **All applicants notified:** within two working days

Applicants not shortlisted may be contacted earlier.

Feedback

We cannot provide feedback routinely due to high volumes of applications. However, we will provide feedback **on request** whenever possible.

Appendix A: Areas of Deprivation Affecting Older People

Funding is prioritised to organisations demonstrating work in areas with higher levels of deprivation affecting older people, using:

- **England:** Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index (IDAOPI) [Income deprivation affecting old people \(IDAOPI\) | Local Deprivation Explorer](#)
- **Wales:** Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) [View map | DataMapWales](#)
- **Scotland:** Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) https://simd.scot/#/simd2020_5pc/BTTTTFTT/8/-4.1224/56.0093/

Applications outside these areas are still considered, but higher priority is given where local need is greater.