



Foundation

## Building Connections Fund Youth strand guidance notes

### Introduction

The £11.5 million Building Connections Fund is a partnership between Government, Big Lottery Fund and the Co-op Foundation, set up in response to the Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness to support projects in England that prevent or reduce loneliness.

The fund aims to:

- increase social connections and create a sense of community and belonging, helping people form strong and meaningful relationships and feel more connected
- support organisations to build on their existing work
- encourage organisations to join up with others locally
- improve the evidence base and use learning to inform longer-term policy and funding decisions.

The fund is split into two strands – the Main fund and the Youth strand.

The Main fund will be distributed by the Big Lottery Fund, making grants of between £30,000 and £100,000. It is open for applications until 24 August 2018. [Find out more.](#)

The Youth strand is made up of £2 million, managed by the Co-op Foundation, making grants of up to £80,000. It is open for applications until 26 September 2018.

All grants will be made by December 2018, and projects funded will be able to run until March 2021.

You can apply to both strands if you have different projects which are eligible for each strand. You will not be able to receive funding from both strands for the same project. Co-op Foundation and Big Lottery Fund will share information to allow us to make informed decisions in cases where we have received similar applications to both strands.



## About the Youth strand

Youth loneliness is widespread, but not widely understood.

Research shows that young people feel lonely more often than any other age group<sup>1</sup>. Despite this, there is still limited understanding of what would be most helpful for young people affected by, or at risk of loneliness.

That's why, as part of the Building Connections Fund, Government and the Co-op Foundation have each contributed £1 million to form a dedicated Youth strand, and are working together to build the evidence base and improve practice on youth loneliness.

The Youth strand of the fund is open to organisations with existing youth-focused activities that could be effective at helping young people avoid long-term loneliness. Successful applicants will receive funding to explore youth loneliness in more depth, test youth-led innovations within their existing provision and share learning as part of a national network.

We will support projects which benefit any groups of young people living within the [most deprived 30% of areas](#) in England.

We will also support projects based in any part of England, which mainly benefit young people with any one or more of the following circumstances:

- Being a carer
- Being unemployed or precariously employed
- Experiencing bereavement
- Having a disability or long-term health condition
- Having been in the care system.

Organisations can apply for up to £80,000, as follows:

- Up to £10,000 (to be spent between December 2018 and March 2019) to engage young people in co-designing innovations to improve the impact of existing provision on tackling loneliness
- Up to £70,000 (to be spent between April 2019 and March 2021) to implement and evaluate these innovations.

Projects funded through the Youth strand will participate in learning activities focused specifically on youth loneliness, as well as being part of the overall Building Connections Fund evaluation.

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<sup>1</sup> Co-op/British Red Cross/Kantar (2016), Trapped in a bubble; Cabinet Office (2017), Community Life Survey 2016-17.

## Who can apply

We can fund UK-based charities, social enterprises and other voluntary and community organisations that do not mainly aim to generate profits for private distribution. Your organisation must be constituted, have a UK bank account in the organisation's name, and at least two unconnected people on the board or management committee.

We can't fund:

- organisations based outside the UK
- individuals or sole traders
- applications made on behalf of another organisation
- organisations aimed at generating profits primarily for private distribution
- organisations that are mainly fundraising bodies or fees for professional fundraisers
- statutory duties
- services run by state or public authorities, unless as part of a partnership led by a voluntary organisation.

We welcome applications from organisations working in partnership, including projects joining up with statutory organisations and involving both voluntary and public sectors, provided they are led by a voluntary organisation.

## What can you spend the money on?

We expect most funds to be spent on revenue costs to deliver your project, which could include (but are not limited to):

- staff salaries
- training and organisational development
- equipment to facilitate activities
- venue hire
- communications campaigns
- marketing
- project activities and other resources to help run the project
- resources to implement or develop the project
- costs for learning and evaluation (recognising that you will be working with our evaluation partner for the Building Connections Fund as a whole).

Although we can't generally fund capital costs (such as buying or refurbishing buildings or large pieces of equipment), we recognise the importance of transport in connecting people, as a means of tackling loneliness. Because of this, you can apply for up to 30% of your funding to cover capital costs that are linked to transport and travel. You will need to secure competitive quotes on all purchases, keep a record of any assets acquired or improved with the funding, and may be subject to additional conditions.

We can't fund any political activities or religious activity, although we are able to fund religious organisations if they are providing benefit for the wider community.

**Ready to apply? Complete our [online application form](#) by 5pm on 26 September 2018.**

## What to expect when you apply

The information you submit will be reviewed by the Co-op Foundation team, who will decide if your project is something we could fund. If it is, we will assess it against the following factors:

- How well it builds on existing work to address youth loneliness
- Diversity and inclusion
- Youth voice
- Outcomes for young people
- Sustainable impact
- How well your organisation is run.

We will shortlist those applications that best meet our criteria and share them with other reviewers, including Co-op stakeholders, Government departments, young people and independent experts. From this review process, recommendations will be made to the Co-op Foundation Board of Trustees, who will make final decisions at the end of November 2018.

If your application is shortlisted, you may be asked to provide additional information about your organisation, to help us carry out checks before we confirm that you have received an award.

If you're successful, we'll let you know by email and then you will receive a grant offer letter and conditions of grant from us in December.

If you're unsuccessful you'll get an email from us letting you know the decision.

## Useful resources

For more information about loneliness, the following sources of research may be helpful:

- [All our emotions are important](#) - breaking the silence about youth loneliness (Co-op Foundation)
- [Loneliness connects us](#) - young people exploring and experiencing loneliness and connection (Manchester Metropolitan University)
- [A place to belong](#) - the role of local youth organisations in addressing youth loneliness (UK Youth)
- [Trapped in a bubble](#) - an investigation into triggers for loneliness in the UK (Co-op/British Red Cross)
- [A call to action](#) - combatting loneliness one conversation at a time (Jo Cox Commission)
- [Loneliness](#) - What characteristics and circumstances are associated with feeling lonely? (ONS)

## Contact us

If you have any questions about the Building Connections Fund Youth Strand, please contact [foundation@coop.co.uk](mailto:foundation@coop.co.uk)