Elsie's Story Community Grant Scheme

Application criteria and guidance

Our Community Grant Scheme supports organisations and groups working to make a meaningful, lasting difference to the lives of children under 18.

We help fund charitable projects that improve children's quality of life, including new projects and work that develops or expands existing activities.

By applying, you agree to the scheme's terms and conditions. If these are breached, we may ask you to repay your grant.

Who can apply?

Applications must be made by an organisation or group, rather than an individual.

You do not need to be a registered charity to apply. However, organisations that are not registered charities must apply for a specific charitable purpose, rather than general running costs or unrestricted funding. Your application must clearly explain and evidence that charitable purpose.

To be eligible, your application must:

- **Directly benefit children under 18**, with a clear explanation of how the project will improve their quality of life.
- **Align with Elsie's Story's charitable aims and core values**, and use funds for lawful, charitable purposes.
- **Support at least one of our four aims:**

    - Helping children enjoy meaningful experiences and make lasting memories.
    - Giving children more opportunities to take part, learn and thrive.
    - Supporting children facing difficult circumstances or barriers.
    - Easing children's pain, distress or hardship.
- **Be for the public benefit of children**, without restricting access on grounds such as religion or ethnicity.
- **Show how the project's benefits will last**, without relying on ongoing funding from Elsie's Story.
- **Include at least three clear, measurable objectives** so we can understand what the project aims to achieve and how its success will be assessed.
- **Demonstrate financial stability and good governance**, with appropriate policies and procedures in place.
- **Meet all relevant equality and non-discrimination laws.**

If your organisation has previously received a grant from Elsie's Story, you must wait at least 12 months from the date you received your award before applying again.

We give priority to applications from the North West of England but do accept applications from projects across the country. We also prioritise projects that deliver lasting benefits, rather than short-term or temporary outcomes.

What can't we fund?

We cannot fund:

- Activities that are not charitable, including support for profit-distributing companies.
- Items or services that public bodies are legally required to provide, sometimes called "statutory provision".
- Requests to top up statutory services.
- Costs that have already been paid.
- Grants that your organisation intends to award to others.
- General appeals or fundraisers.

How much can you apply for?

We usually consider applications for up to £20,000. We may consider requests above £20,000, and there is no fixed upper limit. However, most of our grants are below £20,000, and larger requests require additional supporting information.

What should your application include?

For applications of **up to £20,000**, please provide the following.

1. Your organisation's details

- The name of your organisation or group.
- The name of your main contact.
- Your email address, postal address and telephone number.
- Your charity or company registration number, if applicable.
- The total amount you are requesting.

2. Evidence of financial stability and good governance

- Your latest verified annual accounts.
- Evidence of suitable public liability insurance.
- Your current safeguarding policy and any other relevant safeguarding information.
- Any other policies or procedures directly relevant to your application.

3. An explanation of your project

Please provide at least three SMART objectives. These should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound, explaining what you aim to achieve, how you will measure progress and when you expect to achieve it.

Please also include a description of 2,500 to 6,000 characters, covering:

- What you want to do.
- How children will benefit.
- How your project meets the scheme's aims and eligibility criteria.

4. A breakdown of costs

Please provide:

- A full breakdown of how you would spend the grant.

- Quotes for any individual expenditure item costing £2,000 or more, dated within the last 12 months.
- An explanation of how any ongoing costs will be covered once the grant has been spent.

If you cannot provide three quotes, please explain why in your application.

For applications above £20,000

Please provide all the information above, along with a **full business or project plan** covering:

- The need for funding, supported by evidence.
- The benefits the project will deliver, how and when they will be delivered, and who will be responsible.
- A fully costed funding plan that does not depend on repeat funding from Elsie's Story.
- How you will identify, monitor and manage risks.
- What will happen if the project is unsuccessful or can no longer continue.

What happens after you submit your application?

We review every application to check that it meets the scheme's eligibility criteria. If your application is not eligible, we will contact you to let you know.

Eligible applications are put forward for consideration, usually within eight weeks. We receive a high number of applications and, unfortunately, cannot fund them all. We aim to notify every applicant of the outcome, whether or not their application is successful.

Our trustees are responsible for all grantmaking decisions and reserve the right to decline applications for any reason.

What happens if your application is successful?

We will contact you to confirm your details and arrange payment.

We may attach additional conditions or restrictions to your award. These will be explained clearly in writing, usually by email.

How can you use your grant?

Your grant must be used only for the purposes set out in your application and agreed by Elsie's Story.

If circumstances change and you need to use the money differently, please contact us as soon as possible to discuss and agree any changes. We will do our best to help.

If you use the grant for anything other than the agreed purpose, we may ask you to repay it.

Any money left over after the agreed work or purchases are complete must be returned to Elsie's Story. Please contact us so we can arrange this and keep an accurate record.

What will you need to report?

You must provide a report within 12 months of receiving your award, explaining:

- How the money has been spent.
- What benefits have been delivered, or are being delivered.
- Your progress against each of the SMART objectives in your application.

For longer projects, or where further updates would be helpful, our trustees may request an additional report at a later date.

How should you acknowledge our support?

Successful applicants must publicly acknowledge funding from Elsie's Story. This helps people understand how our funds are used and raises awareness of the scheme.

Our trustees will confirm how your organisation should acknowledge the grant. Depending on the project, this may include one or more of the following:

- Displaying a sign or plaque.
- Sharing a post on social media.
- Displaying a temporary banner or hoarding.
- Mentioning Elsie's Story in press releases about the project.
- Displaying our name or logo on funded equipment, such as a minibus.

Where appropriate, we may also discuss opportunities to promote the project together.