



## Fundraising Applications – Common Mistakes

We've put together a list of some key errors that result in funding bids failing. These are often simple factors that can be avoided, so please take the time to read this resource.

### **STOP!! Check the eligibility criteria**

We urge all groups to take the time to check the funders guidance information and eligibility criteria. This should literally take a few minutes and can save you hours of work.

Each funder will have a different set of criteria, so it is ESSENTIAL to read the guidance for each new fund you plan to apply for.

### **Governance**

- Does your group have the right type of legal structure?
- Does your group have the required Governance documents?
- Does your group have the required number of Trustees/Directors?
- Do you fit the fund income threshold based on your most recent accounts?
- Do you have the relevant policies / documents required?

If you don't meet the criteria, then there is no point in spending hours writing a bid. For example, if they **only fund charities** there is no point applying if your group is a different type of legal structure.

### **Activities funded / priority areas**

Most funders provide a list of activities they will fund as well as a list they **will not** fund. Ensure you read this to determine if your funding need is covered.

### **Make use of pre-application support on offer**

If in doubt, contact the funder to check – again a few minutes emailing, or ideally calling if this option is provided, could save you hours.

And make sure you take on board any information provided. For example, if you ask for clarification on the criteria, it's essential to pay attention to the response!

### **Member feedback**

*We applied for a grant but hadn't properly read all the criteria – applications were only open to groups with a minimum £30k income so we got turned down.*

*Our work was a great match for their priorities and approach so we had felt very confident we would be successful. It was extremely frustrating as the application process was lengthy – but entirely our fault as the criteria was clearly available on their website.*

*When we planned to reapply, the threshold had increased to £50k and our income in that year was £49.5k so we called to check if it was still worth applying. They were very friendly and helpful, but clear we needed a minimum £50k income. **We reapplied when we finally met their criteria and we received three-year core funding!***

## Completing an application

Once you have established that you are **definitely eligible** to apply, you can start drafting your funding application. Below are some key considerations to improve your chance of success:

### Request proportionate funds in relation to your income

- Check minimum and maximum grant amounts.
- Some funders have explicit criteria – for example, requests cannot be more than 30% of your total income.
- If there is no guidance, keep it realistic. If your total income is £10k you are unlikely to be successful requesting £20K for a new project.

### Providing relevant information

- If there is no specific word count, keep your answer **concise** and **relevant**.
- Avoid copying and pasting from a business plan or previous bid unless the information is an EXACT match to the question being asked.
- Ensure you provide all relevant information that the funder will need. Broad information such as “following our successful LGBT+ event” is not enough for the funder. What was the event / how was it successful? You cannot assume they will automatically know, or that they will do additional research. Even if you know the funder organisation, often external panels are used to make grant decisions.

## Outcomes

Most funders ask for some key outcomes if you were to receive a grant. This is an area that often causes difficulties in bids. Many groups confuse ‘outputs’ and ‘outcomes.’

Outputs: the quantity of things that happen as a result of your activities - for example:

- 50 LGBT+ older people consulted
- 12 one-hour social club sessions deliver with average 10 attendees

Outcomes: are the changes that happen as a result of your work or project – for example:

- Older people report feeling more connected and part of the community
- Older people report an increase in emotional wellbeing

**For more information, please use this [link](#) to order our Outcomes Toolkit.**

## Communication

Ensure you respond to any information requests in a timely manner. For example, if the funder asks you provide a copy of a policy or bank statement, make sure you respond!

You may have met all eligibility criteria and submitted a strong bid but were still unsuccessful. If possible, request feedback to help inform future bids.

**Not all funders give feedback**, but either way arguing with the funder or using aggressive or abusive language will not help you get grants.