



ABCD Pathfinder Grant 2026

Application Guidance



Purpose of the guide

Thank you for your interest in the Leeds ABCD community pathfinder grants. This document will provide you with information about the ABCD community pathfinder scheme and guide you through the expression of interest form.

The grant pack includes the following documents which we hope you find useful.

- Expression of Interest form
- What is ABCD Factsheet
- What is a Community Builder Factsheet
- What is a Community Connector Factsheet
- ABCD in Leeds Plan
- ABCD year 6 review summary
- ABCD FAQs

To find out more about the impacts of the ABCD pathfinder scheme in Leeds, please see our video to hear communities share their stories: [ABCD in Leeds Film 'Our Journey' | Abcd In Leeds](#).

What Leeds City Council is looking to fund

We currently fund 11 ABCD community pathfinder sites across the city. Research undertaken by Leeds Beckett University in 2019 demonstrated that the pathfinders are improving health and well-being, reducing loneliness and social isolation. In 2024-2025 we built on this research further with a review of six ABCD pathfinder sites. The review demonstrated the immeasurable impact of investing in the ABCD pathfinder model. Cross cutting connections between diverse communities have become deeply embedded, with true meaningful friendships developed. People adapted, collaborated, and created things, together. A sense of pride, fulfilment, and ownership of where they live, and the 'power to bring about change.'

Leeds City Council is looking to build on the pathfinder model and fund two new ABCD community pathfinder schemes in any of these areas:

- Chapeltown
- Little London
- Hyde Park

We are also open to applications from organisations who work with and represent 'Communities of Interest'. Communities of Interest (COIs) are under-served groups of people or communities who are more likely to experience health inequity. They usually

share an identity, for example people with a learning disability, or an experience, for example people who are homeless.

As well as working with one or more COIs, organisations will need to work within one of the areas identified and feel they could develop the ABCD pathfinder model in that area.

Organisations working with COIs, that are interested in applying for this grant, can contact Forum Central for advice and support - please contact mary.halsey@forumcentral.org.uk for further support.

The grant will be for 24 months initially with an option to extend another year following that subject to further funding.

Project Delivery

ABCD Pathfinders will continue to have two key elements:

- A paid ABCD Community Builder post
- A Small Sparks fund of £2000 to kick start ideas based on what people care about.

The Community Builder will:

- Discover enthused people in the community with skills, gifts or talents and local knowledge; we call these people 'community connectors' to get involved.
- Host conversations with people in neighbourhoods to discover local assets and what people care about.
- Engage local community groups and associations.
- Create places and hold a space where people come together and support each other.
- Build connections through social interaction, activities, and shareable community opportunities- creating places that are welcome and create shareable moments.
- Work with communities to develop a vision and a plan, asking: what can the community do, what does the community need outside help with, what is best delivered by the other agencies and what do outside agencies need to stop doing so that people and communities can be in the driving seat?
- Support communities to create and implement the change they want to see.
- Foster celebration of people's gifts and skills throughout the process.

The expected deliverables of the grant are:

- To have a paid ABCD Community Builder post in place.
- To develop an asset map of the area you are working in.
- To discover ten new Community Connectors who will be active community members, identifying and bringing about the changes they care about and want to see.
- To develop a minimum of ten new people led groups, activities or events to be held in the neighbourhood and/or through social media platforms.

- To evidence how the Small Sparks money is used in the community to fund people and community ideas.
- To proliferate the ABCD model in the area you are working in.
- Commit to embedding an asset-based approach as an organisation, this will include staff attending ABCD training and being part of other learning network offers.
- Work with the ABCD Leeds City Council Team to create an ABCD policy for your organisation.
- Work with the ABCD Leeds City Council Team to develop new ways of measuring impact in the community.

What grants will not be awarded for

Grants will not be awarded to:

- Applicants that do not meet the criteria to apply
- For-profit organisations
- Applicants intending to use the grant for purposes beyond those defined in the project delivery.

Completing the application

Here are some tips to help you with completing the application.

You may complete the written expression of interest, or we are happy to receive the application form questions in audio or video format. If sending an expression of interest application in an audio or video format, please state the question in the application before giving your answer so the panel know which question you are answering.

Please note the panel will stop watching the video after 5 minutes so please keep your answers as concise as possible. Please send videos either via a We Transfer or transfer now link. We are unable to accept any other video transfer links. For video applications, we will still require you to complete a written budget plan and signed declaration.

If you need to discuss accessibility requirements for the grant application, please contact ABCD@leeds.gov.uk.

Your organisation must be a not-for-profit organisation to be eligible to apply. These include but are not limited to:

- Charitable incorporated organisations.
- Community interest companies (CIC) limited by guarantee*
- Companies limited by guarantee with a clause in their governing document preventing distribution of profit (including social enterprises).
- Housing associations.
- Industrial and provident community benefit societies.
- Registered charities.

* If you are applying as a group or organisation representing a COI and are unsure whether your group or organisation falls into one of these categories, Forum Central can talk you through this part of the application. We welcome discussions from un-constituted groups seeking to apply. Please contact Mary.Halsey@forumcentral.org.uk for further information.

Please ensure that your expression of interest demonstrates:

- Evidence of working successfully with the local community you are applying to work in.
- An understanding of the ABCD model and asset-based approaches, with evidence of where your community/ organisation has worked in this way.
- Experience and evidence of implementing and embedding change with communities.
- Evidence of working in partnership with communities, other third sector organisations and public sector bodies.
- Examples of how you might get started with developing the ABCD pathfinder model in the area you are applying to work in.

Only one application per group or organisation will be considered.

Section 1: Applicant Details

1.1 Please use the legal name of your organisation. Your legal name will be on your governing documents and your bank account. Please use your organisation address as registered on your governing documents.

1.2 Please include your organisations company or charity registration.

1.3 Please highlight the area you are applying to work in.

1.4 Please state if you have applied to the ABCD pathfinder grant scheme previously and if so when.

Please state if you have received any funding from Leeds City Council in the last 12 months. If yes, please specify how much and which department provided the funding in section 1.6.

Section 2: Experience

2.1 We want to understand why you feel your organisation is best placed to deliver the ABCD Pathfinder project. Please include your organisations experience of the area you are applying to work in and the Communities of Interest you work with (if relevant), specifically your experience of supporting asset based, community- led activity. We want to understand how you see your organisation nurturing ABCD within your organisation and community. Please give examples of how you work with communities to develop opportunities for positive change.

2.2 We want to hear your ideas on how to get started with the ABCD Pathfinder grant, you may wish to consider:

- What things might you need to get going?
- How might you approach the work and supporting the Community Builder?
- What community assets might you start with?

Our existing pathfinder sites have all fed back very different experiences of getting started in delivering the model, each community is different and so no two approaches are the same.

Section 3: Budget

6.1 Please provide a detailed breakdown of how you propose to spend the £25,000 per annum grant (which includes the £2,000 per annum Small Sparks Fund) during the funding period. Please include in this section a breakdown of:

- Direct costs to deliver the project: this includes staff salary (e.g. Community Builder wage, National Insurance and Income tax) and small sparks
- Other organisational overheads to deliver the project: this may be contributions to building rental, utilities, line management support, IT and Human resources contribution, publicity and events.

Please include full cost recovery in your budget breakdown. Full cost recovery means to evidence 100% of the cost of the project's delivery is covered by the value of the grant.

How each pathfinder site chooses to deliver the project is individual to the organisation. Further information can be found in the FAQs.

Next Steps

Following your expression of interest, we will contact you to advise if your organisation has been shortlisted. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to attend an in-person conversation, hosted by a panel comprised of the ABCD in Leeds team and Community Builders, to discuss your ideas for delivering the ABCD Pathfinder scheme in your area. These questions have been devised in partnership with our existing Pathfinder sites and Community Builders. Further information on this stage of the application will be shared at point of shortlisting and accompanying guidance will be provided. Successful applicants will be notified by end of June 2026.

Successful applicants will be required to sign a grant agreement in order to draw down the funding from Leeds City Council.

The anticipated start date for delivery of the grant is July 2026 unless previously agreed with the grant team.

Support with your application

Please look at the ABCD in Leeds website for more information about our ABCD programme (www.abcdinleeds.com/about)

If you would like to have an informal conversation and/or have any questions on the application form, accessibility or the process please email us at: ABCD@leeds.gov.uk

If you are applying as a group or organisation representing a COI, for a further conversation about the support available from Forum Central please contact:

Mary.Halsey@forumcentral.org.uk.

Please keep your answers clear and concise and answer all questions on the application form and keeping to the word count. Please sign your application form with a wet signature. Please submit written and audio or video applications by **12 noon on 22nd April 2026** to: ABCD@leeds.gov.uk.

Applications submitted after this date and time will not be considered.