

Change into Action Sandwell Funding Guidelines

Background

Change into Action has been created by a consortium of local and regional government, public and voluntary sector organisations, operating as part of the West Midlands Combined Authority's (WMCA) Homelessness Taskforce.

Change into Action has three objectives:

- Providing to the public information about homelessness
- Providing to the public a way in which to give money to support people who are or have been sleeping rough
- Enabling the public to identify and locate rough sleepers so that they can be connected to local support services

The Homelessness Taskforce through the WMCA will support Local Authorities to set up local processes and adapt the Change into Action website for their area. The WMCA will provide and manage the Change into Action framework. The responsibility and oversight of the process for managing, prioritising, distributing and reporting on use of the funds raised sits with the individual Local Authorities who will report to the WMCA Homelessness Taskforce on progress.

It is vital that in raising funds there is a clear and transparent process for managing, prioritising, distributing and reporting on use of the donations received.

This document sets out how this process will operate in Sandwell.

Sandwell Council of Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) will act as the fund holder, and together with the Change into Action Sandwell Funding Panel will oversee access to the fund and will report progress to Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council.

1. Conditions of Use

Applications will only be considered from organisations that are working in Sandwell with rough sleepers, individuals who have rough slept recently or individuals who are in imminent danger of rough sleeping. Applications will be considered from local organisations, faith groups, charities and community groups. Both Change into Action Sandwell partner and non-partner organisations can apply for funding.

Applications must show how the funding requested will support rough sleepers and those at risk of sleeping rough to move off the streets, away from homelessness and re-build their lives.

Decisions on funding will be at the sole discretion of the Change into Action Sandwell Funding Panel. Where necessary, the Funding Panel, SCVO and Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council may request further information from the organisation applying for funding in order to progress and process a funding application.

The following conditions apply to the use of Change into Action Sandwell fund:

- No service user will be asked to repay any amount of the Change into Action Sandwell fund
- The fund must never be used as a loan fund
- Repeat applications may be considered, on a case by case basis, where it can be evidenced that further funding will continue to support individuals or prevent rough sleeping

2. Thresholds and Guide to Funding Available

Applications for individuals

Applications can be made by an organisation who is working with a specific individual that is rough sleeping, has been rough sleeping recently or is at imminent risk of rough sleeping. All applications for funding up to £700 will be referred to the Change into Action Sandwell Funding Panel for a decision.

Applications for amounts above £700 will only be considered in very exceptional circumstances.

Applications for small projects

Applications can be made by an organisation to deliver a small-scale project or intervention that will support rough sleepers to move off the streets or initiatives that aim to prevent rough sleeping. All applications for funding up to £2,000 will be referred to the Change into Action Sandwell Funding Panel for a decision.

Applications for amounts above £2,000 will only be considered in very exceptional circumstances.

3. Change into Action Sandwell Key Definitions

Rough Sleeper/Rough Sleeping

For the purposes of clarity, Change into Action Sandwell seeks to define the term 'rough sleeper/rough sleeping' below using the Government's 2010 definition:

People sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or "bashes").

In terms of clarifying whether a service user 'has recently been rough sleeping', we ask for applications to define the date and duration that the service user was rough sleeping. However, we have placed no set limit upon a time frame this may include. The decision to award funding will be solely at the discretion of the Change into Action Sandwell Funding Panel after thoroughly assessing the application.

4. Change into Action Sandwell Funding Principles

- i. All means of alternative funding should be explored first, providing evidence where appropriate when making an application for Change into Action Sandwell funding.
- ii. The fund must not be used to replace statutory benefits, government awarded grants or any other payments to which the service users have entitlement.
- iii. Change into Action Sandwell funding will only be granted if there will be a demonstrable positive impact upon the life of rough sleepers or those at risk of rough sleeping, helping them to transition into independent living and improve their health and well-being.

- iv. The expenditure of Change into Action Sandwell funding must be reasonable and necessary.
- v. Change into Action Sandwell funding applications and grants will bear public scrutiny, creating an ethos where involvement, accountability and transparency are welcomed and where challenge is viewed as a crucial and constructive measure of improving outcomes.

5. What can the Change into Action Sandwell Fund be used for?

Applications for individuals

This will be dependent on each service user's needs and around their individual case. Examples of uses that may be considered appropriate are listed below. Please note, this list is not exhaustive:

- Bedding, furniture, white goods for new accommodation
- Basic kitchen items if an individual is moving into independent accommodation
- New clothes that are bought to fit an individual
- The first £10 on the electricity meter
- A travel card for a month to get to appointments
- Rent deposit for a private flat
- The fee to join a course or an art or exercise class to build confidence and move away from the street

Change into Action Sandwell would strongly encourage a conversation with the individual about what would make a difference in their lives.

Applications for small projects

Applications should focus on the delivery of small-scale projects or interventions that will support rough sleepers to move off the streets or initiatives that aim to prevent rough sleeping in Sandwell.

Applications requesting funding to prevent rough sleeping should focus on the set-up and delivery of services and /or support to assist those at risk of rough sleeping or with a history of rough sleeping to move towards accessing and sustaining settled accommodation.

Applications could also focus on the delivery of wider support services and interventions that aim to improve the health and wellbeing and / or rebuild the confidence of rough sleepers or those at risk of sleeping rough which will in turn help with the journey towards obtaining and sustaining settled accommodation.

Examples of the type of activities or interventions that could be funded are listed below. Please note, this list is not exhaustive:

- Increased provision to meet spikes in demand or respond to severe weather / other events that will reduce harm for those sleeping rough in the Borough
- Piloting new ways of working or innovative approaches to offering support to rough sleepers
- Trialling responses to meeting identified gaps in existing service provision
- Additional provision to meet the immediate welfare and support needs of those sleeping rough
- Delivering or commissioning organised activities that support confidence, self-esteem and health and well-being and tackle loneliness and isolation
- Interventions that provide support to help individuals to volunteer and prepare to be 'work ready'

Change into Action Sandwell would strongly encourage a conversation with service users and those with lived experience about what would make a difference in their lives and this should be evidenced in applications to the fund.

6. Fund Administration

The Change into Action Sandwell Funding Panel, chaired and managed by SCVO, has responsibility for overseeing the fund and its allocation. All decisions are made by the Change into Action Sandwell Funding Panel and not the sole responsibility of SCVO or any individual party.

SCVO act as the fund holder and will administer payments to successful applicants.

Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) is the donation platform being used for online donations. Donations to Change into Action Sandwell are made using the donation platform via a link through the Change into Action Sandwell website.

The Change into Action Sandwell Funding Panel consists of 3-6 members, with a minimum of 3 panel members being required to make an award for payment and to be quorate. Decisions will be made by a simple majority. Panel members may include Change into Action Sandwell partners, local organisations and charities, faith groups, community groups and members of the business community.

The Change into Action Sandwell Funding Panel will fully assess each funding application. Panel members cannot be involved in the decision making if they have a vested or pecuniary interest in the application. If they have an interest, they must declare it before the decision is made and withdraw from the decision-making process in relation to that application.

Any appeal to a funding application decision should be made in writing by the organisation who is applying, within 5 working days, to the chair of the Change into Action Sandwell Funding Panel (by emailing changeintoaction@scvo.info), explaining how they believe that the application request does meet the Change into Action Sandwell Funding Guidelines. The chair of the Change into Action Sandwell Funding Panel will consider the information received and will advise of the outcome.

7. Application Process

Submission of Funding Applications

To apply for funding, organisations will need to complete and submit the Change into Action Sandwell funding application web form which can be completed on the Change into Action Sandwell website.

All applications for funding will be sent to and reviewed by the Change into Action Sandwell Funding Panel which will meet at appropriate intervals which will be published on SCVO's website and SCVO's communication channels.

For emergency applications for individuals, the panel can decide virtually (via email) prior to the next arranged panel meeting.

Purchase of Goods, Items and Services

The chair of the Change into Action Sandwell Funding Panel will contact the lead contact for each application once the panel has decided on their funding application.

Once communication has been received that the application has been successful, the organisation should proceed and purchase any agreed goods/items/services within the budget agreed by the Funding Panel. The organisation should ensure that they retain all receipts and evidence for any purchases made.

Cash should not be given directly to individuals.

Payment to Organisations

Payments for approved applications will be made to organisations by SCVO through electronic bank transfer. Successful organisations will be contacted to confirm bank account details and relevant references. All successful applications will receive payment prior to purchasing the agreed goods/items/services under the condition that they will provide all of the following monitoring information to the Change into Action Sandwell Funding Panel.

Organisations should keep reasonable evidence detailing costs incurred and activity delivered, this will include:

- Receipts / evidence of goods/items/services purchased
- Confirmation of service costs and payments made
- Confirmation that the service user (s) have received the goods, items or services
- Confirmation of activity delivered
- Completed project monitoring template (for small project applications)

This information should be provided on a quarterly basis to the Change into Action Sandwell Funding Panel.

Successful applications for small projects will be required to complete a short monitoring template at the end of the funded project period.

If an organisation that has received funding from Change into Action Sandwell does not provide proof of delivery and of costs incurred or the project monitoring template (for small project applications), Change into Action Sandwell may seek a reimbursement of funding and this may affect the organisation's ability to make further applications to the fund.

8. Record Keeping and Monitoring

Successful applicants should record how any monies obtained from the fund have been utilised and should provide this information as part of the monitoring information requirements to the Change into Action Sandwell Funding Panel.

Receipts should be obtained by the organisation for all purchases and the original proof of expenditure should be retained by the organisation.

Successful applications for small projects will be monitored by the Change into Action Sandwell Funding Panel. Organisations will be asked to provide progress and performance updates in line with the targets and outcomes set out in the original application and to submit a short exit summary report when the project is completed.

SCVO will monitor, and keep a full record of, all donations received to the fund, beneficiaries and what the fund is being used for.

9. Changes to an Approved Application

If the cost of a service or product which has been approved changes, please notify the funding panel by email to changeintoaction@scvo.info of the reason for the change in cost and the new expected cost. The funding panel will consider the revised costs and reasons for these and the applicant will be informed if these can be approved.

10. Impact of Change into Action Sandwell Funding

Change into Action Sandwell and its partners are keen to hear stories of how the fund has made a difference. Good news stories can be provided in many ways such as case studies, interviews with support staff and the use of performance monitoring information.

As part of receiving a Change into Action Sandwell grant, we would like to work with organisations to support the Change into Action communications campaign and show the positive outcomes that are being achieved through partner organisations.

We welcome the opportunity to talk with organisations that have received funding and to share how it has positively impacted the lives of those rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping in Sandwell, with the public. Please contact changeintoaction@scvo.info for further information or to share good news stories.