Solihull Change into Action Funding Guidelines

Contents

Background

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

CiA 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 rough sleepers or who are at risk of rough sleeping
- 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 LA's to set up local processes and adapt the CiA website for their area. The WMCA will provide and manage the CiA 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 documents sets out how this process will operate in Solihull. The Solihull CiA Funding Panel will oversee access to and monitor use of the funding raised and will report progress through Solihull's Multi-Agency Homelessness Forum (MAHF), Solihull Homelessness Strategy & Delivery Group and the WMCA Homelessness Taskforce.

1. Conditions of Use

Applications will only be considered from organisations that are working with rough sleepers or those at risk of homelessness in Solihull.

The application 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.

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.

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.

Decisions on funding will be at the sole discretion of the Solihull CiA Funding Panel. Where necessary, the Homelessness Taskforce or Solihull's MAHF may request further information regarding individual funding applications and the local decision making process.

The following conditions apply to the use of the Solihull CiA funding:

- No service user or organisation will be asked to repay any amount of the CiA 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 prevent homelessness or rough sleeping from occurring or will ensure on-going support for rough sleepers.
- Applications which propose provision of services / support already in place will not be funded

2. Thresholds and Guide to Funding Available

All applications for funding will be referred to the Solihull CiA Funding Panel for a decision. The maximum amount of funding that can be requested through an application is £2,000.

The Solihull CiA Funding Panel will meet on a quarterly basis to review and make a decision on applications received and monitor the progress of those projects that have received funding through previous allocations.

Applications for amounts above £2,000 will be considered by the Funding Panel in exceptional circumstances and this will need to be evidenced as part of the application process.

In exceptional circumstances the panel may agree to make a decision on an application outside of the quarterly meeting schedule. There must be a clearly stated reason why an urgent decision is required and this must be made clear when the funding application is submitted.

3. Change into Action Key Definitions

Rough Sleeper/Rough Sleeping - For the purposes of clarity, Solihull CiA Funding Panel 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 applications to support those who have recently been rough sleeping or are at risk of rough sleeping, we ask bidders to provide information on the nature of the rough sleeping risk or details about the date and duration of recent periods of rough sleeping where an application relates to a specific individual.

However, we have placed no set limit upon a time frame or set of circumstances that this may include. The decision to award funding will be solely at the discretion of the CiA Fund Panel after thoroughly assessing the application and supporting evidence provided.

4. Change into Action Funding Principles

i. All means of alternative funding should be explored first, providing evidence where appropriate when making an application for CiA 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. CiA 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 CiA funding must be reasonable and necessary.

v. CiA 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 Fund be used for?

The type of activities or interventions that could be funded through the Solihull CiA grant funding include:

- 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'
- Financial support to develop or facilitate suitable housing options for those at risk of rough sleeping, where this cannot be sourced through other local arrangements

The above list is not intended to be exhaustive. It is recognised that local organisations may have some innovative ideas for supporting rough sleepers that have not yet been considered and that respond to issues raised by service users or those working closely with rough sleepers.

The CiA Fund panel 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 Solihull CiA Fund Panel has responsibility for overseeing the fund and its allocation.

Solihull Churches Action on Homelessness (SCAH) will act as the fund holder and will administer payments to successful organisations. Donations will be collected online through the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) bank, with a link provided through Solihull's CiA website pages, and the Solihull BID will lead on piloting a number of cash donation points in Solihull Town Centre, working with SCAH to collect and account for the cash donations received.

The CiA Fund Panel will consist of up to 6 core member organisations, where a minimum of 3 Panel members will be required to make an award for payment. Panel members will include a member / representative of:

- Solihull Council,
- Solihull BID
- The Voluntary and Community Sector in Solihull
- The business community,
- West Midlands Police, and
- Ideally an individual with lived experience or a family member or friend of an individual with lived experience

The CiA Fund Panel will fully assess each funding application according to the guidelines set out in this document. 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.

A decision by a minimum of 3 Panel members will be required to make an award for payment. The decision will be made by a simple majority.

7. Application Process
a) Submission of Funding Applications
All applications for funding must be made by completing the CiA Funding Application form which is available to download from the Solihull CiA website.

Any queries about the funding or the submission process should be sent to solihullcia@solihull.gov.uk

Funding deadlines are:

31st January
30th April
31st July
31st October

The CiA Fund Panel will meet within 5 working days of the funding deadline. The Panel will aim to inform applicants of a decision within 5 working days after the Panel meetings. In exceptional circumstances the panel may agree to make a decision on an application outside of the quarterly meeting schedule. There must be a clearly stated reason why an urgent decision is required and this must be made clear when the funding application is submitted.

b) Purchase of Goods or Services

A representative for Solihull CiA will contact the lead contact for each application once the Panel has made a decision on their funding application.

Once communication has been received that the application has been successful, the successful organisation should begin project implementation. As part of the application process a breakdown of costs should be provided and the successful organisation will need to ensure they deliver the project in accordance with the cost breakdown, retaining all receipts and evidence for any purchases made.

Cash should not be given directly to individuals.

c) Payment to Delivery Partners

Once approved 100% of the grant payment will be made to the successful organisation by SCAH through electronic bank transfer. The successful organisation will be contacted to confirm bank account details and relevant references.

The successful organisation should keep reasonable evidence detailing the cost of the project delivery, this will include:

- Receipts / evidence of goods purchases
- Confirmation of service costs and payment
- Confirmation that the service user (s) have received the good or services

This information should be provided on a quarterly basis in a project monitoring template to the Solihull CiA Fund Panel.

If an organisation that has received funding from Solihull CiA does not submit the project monitoring template or provide proof of delivery Solihull CiA will request a reimbursement of funding and this may affect the organisations ability to make further applications to the fund.

8. Record Keeping & Monitoring

Successful applicants must record how any monies obtained from the fund have been utilised and should provide this information as part of the quarterly project monitoring information to be provided to the Solihull CiA Funding Panel.

The Solihull CiA Funding panel will monitor those projects that have received funding as part of the quarterly meetings. Successful applicants 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 an exit summary report when the project is completed.

Receipts must be obtained by the successful applicants for all purchases made / costs incurred through the delivery of a project or initiative through the CiA programme and the original proof of expenditure should be retained by the successful applicant. Financial monitoring should be provided as part of the quarterly project update.

9. Changes to an Approved Application

If the cost of a service or product on an approved application changes, please notify the Solihull CiA funding panel by email to solihullcia@solihull.gov.uk of the reason for the change in cost and the new expected cost.

The CiA Funding Panel will consider the revised costs and reasons for these and the applicant will be informed if these can be approved. This will be done outside of the quarterly meeting schedule to ensure that there are no unnecessary hold-ups to approved schemes.

10. Impact of CiA Funding

Solihull CiA Funding Panel is keen to hear stories of how the support funded through CiA has made a difference. These can be provided in all sorts of different ways, including case studies, interviews with support staff, use of performance monitoring information etc. As part of receiving a CiA grant the funding panel would like to work with organisations to support the CiA communications campaign and show the positive outcomes that are being achieved through Solihull's partner organisations.

The funding panel would welcome the opportunity to talk with organisations that have received funding about how the public might get to hear about what has been done with their money. Please contact for solihullcia@solihull.gov.uk for further information or to share good news stories.