Domestic Abuse Fund – Funding Guidelines

1. Introduction

This fund is for **‘led by and for’ organisations** providing specialist domestic abuse services. We expect to make around 20 five-year running cost grants of £250,000 (£50,000 per year) to help organisations strengthen their foundations, grow their work and build long-term impact.

This programme is part of our Safer Futures funding priority, which funds services that help people rebuild their lives after abuse, displacement or prison. More information on our funding priorities and strategy can be found at <https://henrysmith.foundation/strategy/> .

What we mean by a ‘led by and for’ organisation

We define ‘led by and for’ organisations as those run, designed and delivered by and for people who are from marginalised and minoritised communities that face additional forms of discrimination, and structural and systemic inequality. These include communities such as LGBT+ people, d/Deaf and disabled people and those from racially minoritised communities. Organisations will provide specialist services for individuals who are experiencing domestic abuse. By this we mean:

* The majority of both your trustees and your staff are from the community you support
* You run a service that specialises in supporting individuals from your community who are experiencing/have experienced domestic abuse
* This support is delivered by specially trained staff with a deep understanding of domestic abuse and the barriers your community faces
* The support is person-centred and holistic: tailored to the diverse and wide-ranging needs of the individual

This definition is based on the those used by the [Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales](https://domesticabusecommissioner.uk/briefings/briefing-paper-on-proposals-for-a-specialist-by-and-for-funding-pot/) and [Women’s Aid](https://www.womensaid.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Womens-Aid-Definitions-Specialist-Womens-DA-Services-By-For-Services-January-2024.pdf).

We’re focusing on ‘led by and for’ organisations because they play a vital role in supporting survivors from marginalised and minoritised communities, yet they remain consistently underfunded.

What we’re looking to fund:

* **Strong track record** – your organisation has at least three years’ experience of providing specialist domestic abuse services to your community. You have a clear understanding of the intersecting needs of victim-survivors from marginalised and minoritised communities and are well embedded within your community. Your staff have the relevant expertise and experience to safely support the people you work with.
* **In-depth and consistent** – you offer ongoing support that responds to an individual's changing needs. We recognise that people may dip in and out of services depending on what’s happening in their lives, but your organisation should be a steady, trusted source of support whenever they need it. We won’t fund organisations that are only providing short-term interventions or helplines.
* **Person-centred** – your services are tailored to the unique needs of each individual. One-to-one support, such as casework, is a core part of your approach. The type of support should be developed with the individual, so they shape what it looks like and have choice and control throughout. We won’t fund organisations that only offer group-based support.
* **Holistic** – you provide wrap-around support that addresses an individual’s range of needs. This means that ideally you will provide a number of services such as counselling, safe accommodation, casework, immigration advice and practical support. Where you are unable to meet an individual’s needs you will work in partnership with other organisations and help them to access this wider support.

Objectives

We want to fund organisations that can clearly show the difference they make to the people they support. We’re not prescriptive about what outcomes we’d expect you to achieve, but we expect your work to contribute to meaningful, lasting change for victim-survivors of domestic abuse.

Examples of outcomes for your service-users might include:

* Feeling more able to disclose abuse and seek support
* Feeling safer
* Feeling less isolated
* Having more choice and control
* Being able to access safe housing
* Being able to secure their rights and entitlements
* Having improved knowledge
* Having improved understanding
* Experiencing improved (mental) health and wellbeing

1. Eligibility Criteria

You can only apply to this fund if your organisation meets all of the following criteria:

* You are a ‘led by and for’ organisation
* You provide specialist domestic abuse services
* Your organisation is a registered not-for-profit organisation with a charitable purpose. This can include registered charity, CIO or CIC.
* Your organisation must have published your first annual accounts
* Your organisation has a safeguarding policy
* Your organisation primarily operates in the UK
* If you have an active Henry Smith Foundation grant, you must be in the final year. Please contact your Grant Manager if you are unsure.

What we would usually expect to see

While not essential, we would typically expect that:

* Your organisation is independent (where the board of directors have full control over the organisation, rather than under the control of a parent organisation or non-federated group structure.)
* Your board has a minimum of three unrelated trustees or directors
* The majority of your board and leadership team are not related
* Any payments you make require dual authorisation / unrelated signatories
* You do not have promotion of faith as your primary charitable aim. We are happy to fund specialist domestic abuse services delivered by faith-based organisations, provided that their primary purpose is the support of people from their community and not promotion of faith.

If you are not sure whether you're eligible then do [contact us](https://henrysmith.foundation/contact-us/) for an informal chat.

How we will prioritise applications

This programme is specifically for organisations led by and for people from marginalised and minoritised communities.

We aim to ensure a spread of grants across a range of communities and will also seek to fund work in a range of geographical locations. If we receive more fundable applications than we are able to fund, we will prioritise organisations as required in order to help us achieve this.

1. How to apply

We’ve kept the process simple and clear. Here’s what to expect at each stage.

Application timeline

1. **Eligibility quiz**

Start by taking our short online quiz. It will help you to find out if your organisation is eligible to apply. If you’re eligible, you can submit an expression of interest.

**Applications open: 13th August**

1. **Expression of Interest**

We will invite all eligible organisations to complete a short online expression of interest form to assess their fit with the fund and its aims.

We will review your submission, as well as your publicly available accounts and website (where applicable). If we require any further information, we will contact you using the details provided in the form.

We will decline any submissions which are ineligible, or are not a strong fit with the fund, on a rolling basis. We will prioritise those which are a good fit with the programme as outlined here (create internal link in the document to the prioritisation section).

We will be taking 40 applications through to the next stage of the process and these organisations will be invited to submit a full application.

**Deadline to submit your EOI: 10th September at 5:00pm.**

1. **Full Application**

We will let you know if you have been invited to submit a full application by 29th September. If you are invited to submit a full application, we will ask you to provide further details on the services your organisation delivers, the changes you want to see for the people you support and your financial situation.

In the resources section of the [Domestic Abuse Fund web page](https://henrysmith.foundation/grants/domestic-abuse-fund/) you will find a Word document of the form to help you develop your application, but please note you will need to submit your application via our online portal.

**Deadline to submit your form: 27th October at 5:00pm.**

1. **A conversation with us**

If your application demonstrates that your work is a good fit, we will arrange a call with you in order to find out more about your work and gather some information on your approach to safeguarding. We will also carry out a due diligence assessment at this time.

1. **Decisions**

If you are successful, we will send you confirmation of the decision in December.

Funding Details

We will make 20 grants. All organisations will receive £250,000 over 5 years (£50,000 per year).

We will provide running costs funding but we are open to discussing project cost grants should this be your preference.

1. What to expect if you get a grant

We want to build strong relationships with our grant holders and support your work beyond just funding.

If you are awarded a grant, we plan to have a call with you in the first couple of months of the grant to get a better understanding of how you would like to work with us. You will also need to submit a copy of your bank statement.

Each year we will ask you to complete a short online form before we release your next payment. We will also want to learn about how the work is going. You can either have a call with us or send us a written report. We will discuss your preferences at the beginning of the grant.

In year two or three, we’ll arrange a visit to learn more about your work and get to know you better. These visits aren’t tied to funding decisions and will be shaped around what works best for you.

Beyond the Grant

We are planning to fund 20 organisations and will provide opportunities for you to learn, connect and share experiences if you wish.

1. Get in Touch

We’re here to help. Whether, you’re thinking about applying or just have a few questions, we encourage you to contact us.

* Call us on 020 7264 4970
* Request a callback and a member of our team will get in touch
* Email us at [saferfutures@henrysmith.foundation](mailto:saferfutures@henrysmith.foundation)

We’re happy to talk through your plans and help you understand if this programme is the right fit for your organisation.

Read Our FAQs

We’ve put together a **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**, which you can find at <https://henrysmith.foundation/domestic-abuse-fund-faq/> .

We strongly recommend reading it before applying, as it covers lots of common questions about eligibility and how the programme works.

Join our webinar

We’ll be hosting a webinar to share more about the Domestic Abuse Fund, our approach and what we’re looking to fund. There will be time to ask questions, too.

Date: 12th August 2025, from 1-2 pm

To register, please [visit the sign up page.](https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/df2d9802-a7a6-4675-8e43-8e74a6afaf6b@8b63492b-8ac3-46f9-bc35-f7b7ceb0c214)

A recording will be available on our website after the event.

Access support

We want this process to be accessible to everyone. If you, or someone in your organisation, needs support to complete an Expression of Interest or Full Application because of disability, neurodivergence, language or communication barriers, or other access needs, we can help.

We offer an accessibility support grant to help cover costs such as BSL interpreters, scribes, translation services, assistive technology, or support workers. You can get:

* £250 at the Expression of Interest stage
* £500 at the Full Application stage (if invited)

If your access needs are more complex or you're not sure what kind of support would be most helpful, please get in touch to talk it through.

How to apply:

1. Prepare the following information:

* Your name and role
* Your organisation’s name and charity or company number
* A recent bank statement from your organisation (issued within the last three months)
* The type of support you need
* Who will provide the support (confirming they are UK-based)
* Your preferred way and time for us to contact you.

1. Let us know the above details by:

* Email: [saferfutures@henrysmith.foundation](mailto:saferfutures@henrysmith.foundation)
* Requesting a call back via [our website](https://henrysmith.foundation/contact-us/).

1. We’ll get back to you

We aim to respond within five working days to confirm if your request is approved. Once approved, you will need to confirm with us that you've agreed to work with your chosen support provider. The payment will typically be processed within one week.

We may also invite you to share feedback about the accessibility support process, helping us improve our support.

If you’re unsure what kind of support you need or would like to discuss this support further, please [get in touch.](https://henrysmith.foundation/contact-us/) in touch. We’re happy to help.

**Data statement**

No personal data concerning third party individuals should be included within your email without their explicit knowledge, and informed consent, that this information will be shared with the Henry Smith Foundation.

We process all personal data provided to us in your email for the purposes of assessing your application, managing or monitoring any grant awarded and any related administration or research purposes in accordance with our privacy policy, a copy of which can be viewed here.

We reserve the right to share personal information to detect and prevent fraud and do not require your consent.