Shout! Funding Guidelines

# 1. Introduction

Shout! is here to make sure young people are heard, especially when the world does not listen. Through the Shout! Fund, we expect to make around 20 grants of up to £240,000 over four years (£60,000 per year) to support advocacy services working with young people.

This grant fund is part of our Building Independence programme, which funds services that support young people through the transition into adulthood. More information on our funding priorities and strategy can be found [on our website](https://henrysmith.foundation/strategy/).

The Shout! Fund supports independent non-statutory advocacy services that help young people speak up, make informed choices, and secure their rights. This could include casework, one-to-one, group or peer advocacy, as long as it meets our key features of advocacy outlined in these guidelines.

You don’t need to call your work ‘advocacy’ to apply. If your work helps young people navigate systems (especially where they are being excluded, misunderstood or marginalised) and move forward on their own terms, we want to hear from you. If your service provides the kind of support outlined in these guidelines, regardless of how you label it, we encourage you to apply.

Our focus is on young people aged 14 to 25, but we recognise that services don’t always neatly fit into age brackets. Your services don’t need to be exclusively working with this age group, but you should be able to show a clear understanding of the specific issues they face and how your support meets their needs.

Shout! is focused on reaching young people who are too often marginalised or overlooked in mainstream systems. We are focusing on organisations supporting:

* Care-experienced young people – We know care experience isn’t always formally recorded, and we don’t expect young people to provide proof. Our understanding of young people who are care-experienced includes those who’ve been in foster care, residential care, kinship care, or have left care.
* LGBT+ young people – We welcome applications from organisations supporting young people across the full spectrum of LGBT+ identities. We will fund organisations that work inclusively and affirm the rights, identities, and lived experiences of all LGBT+ people.
* Young people with a learning disability and/or neurodivergence – We recognise that not everyone has a formal diagnosis of a learning disability or neurodivergence. We welcome applications from organisations that offer support without requiring a diagnosis and take an inclusive approach.

To be eligible your work must support one of these groups. If you work with a broader community but it includes a significant proportion of people from these groups, you are still welcome to apply. However, you will need to show clearly why your organisation is well placed to support them.

## Our key features of advocacy

You don’t need to call your work ‘advocacy’ to apply. We are interested in funding services that support young people to speak up, make choices, and secure their rights. If your work aligns with these key features, we encourage you to apply.

* Person-led – The young person being supported sets the agenda. You walk alongside them, not ahead or over them - unless that’s what they want or ask for.
* Forward-focused – You support young people to move toward goals that matter to them, whether it’s finding a home, accessing support, building confidence, or challenging a system. You should be able to show how you know when progress has been made, or a goal has been achieved.
* Independent – The service is not tied to care or treatment provision or a particular authority. Staff can act in the young person’s best interests and represent their wishes without conflict.
* Support individuals with rights, decisions, and systems – You help young people to:
  + Understand their options
  + Navigate services
  + Be involved in decisions about their life
  + Challenge unfair treatment
  + Speak up about what matters to them
* Self-improvement – Whether through one-to-one work, group spaces, peer support or self-advocacy, your service builds young people’s skills, confidence, and ability to express their needs now and in the future.
* Accessible and inclusive – Your support adapts to individual communication needs, cultural backgrounds, identities and lived experience. It is trauma-informed, gender-informed and culturally-informed.
* Regular engagement that isn’t time-limited – Whether in one-to-one or group settings, your service provides opportunities for regular engagement over time, allowing young people to build trusting relationships.

If you’re unsure whether your service fits, we encourage you to contact us for an informal conversation.

# 2. Eligibility criteria

Shout! is focused on services that provide independent, person-led, non-statutory advocacy. We welcome different approaches, but we are not able to fund services that only offer:

* Peer support groups that bring young people together around shared experience, but without a focus on rights, voice, or structured goal-setting
* Mentoring or befriending that is mainly about emotional support or personal development
* Information, advice, and guidance (IAG) that’s limited to signposting or one-off advice
* Service navigation that doesn’t have a rights-based or person-led advocacy approach

This isn’t a complete list, but it should give a sense of what falls outside the scope of this fund. If you’re not sure whether it qualifies, we encourage you to reach out for a conversation.

Your organisation also needs to meet the following eligibility criteria:

* Be a formally registered, not-for-profit organisation with a charitable purpose (e.g. CIO, CIC, community benefit society)
* Be based in the United Kingdom, and ensure the work you are applying for supports people living here
* Have an annual income of £5 million or less, as shown in your most recent published accounts. There is no lower limit, and we welcome applications from smaller organisations
* Have audited or independently inspected published annual accounts
* If you already have a grant from the Henry Smith Foundation, please email [buildingindependence@henrysmith.foundation](mailto:buildingindependence@henrysmith.foundation) and speak with us first.
* Have an up-to-date safeguarding policy and practice

# 3. 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 [on our website](https://henrysmith.foundation/eligibility-checker/building-independence/). It will help you find out if your organisation is eligible to apply. If you’re eligible, you can submit an expression of interest.

Applications open: 9am, Wednesday 23 July 2025.

2. Expression of Interest (EOI)

This helps us to see if your work is a good fit before you spend time on a full application. It’s a short online form with three key questions. We’ll review all Expressions of Interest and invite around 40 organisations to move forward to the next stage.

Deadline to submit your EOI: 5pm, Wednesday 20 August 2025.

We’ll let you know the outcome by Friday 5 September 2025.

3. Full Application

If you're invited to this stage, we’ll ask more detailed questions about your approach, your team, the difference you’re making, and what this funding could do for your organisation. We’ll also carry out due diligence checks.

Deadline to submit: 5pm, Monday 6 October 2025.

4. A conversation with us

You’ll have a call with a member of our team. It’s a chance for us to learn more about your work, your safeguarding processes, and for you to ask us any questions you may have. These will take place from October to November 2025.

5. Decisions

We will make around 20 grants through this fund. We’ll contact all applicants with a decision by Mid December 2025.

## What we are looking for

### Expression of Interest stage

At this first stage, we’re looking for a strong early fit with the aims of the fund. We’ll prioritise Expressions of Interest that:

* Align with our key features of advocacy. We want services that empower young people to speak up, make informed choices, and secure their rights. These features are outlined in the guidance.
* Come from organisations that meaningfully involve people with lived experience in shaping services and making decisions at every level.
* Help us ensure UK-wide reach. We aim to fund organisations across all four nations. We particularly encourage applications from Northern Ireland, Wales, and rural communities.
* Support at least one of our priority groups. This includes care-experienced young people, LGBT+ young people, young people with a learning disability and/or neurodivergence. We’re looking for work that is clearly focused on young people aged 14 to 25, even if your organisation also works with other age groups.
* We will aim to ensure all priority groups are represented at the next stage.

We will invite around 40 organisations to submit a Full Application.

### Full Application stage

If you're invited to make a full application, we’ll look more closely at your organisation and the work you’re asking us to fund. In addition to the above criteria, we will assess the following:

1. Who you work with and why it matters

We’ll look at:

* Who your service supports, and how their identities and lived experiences shape the way your work is designed and delivered
* The kinds of challenges young people are bringing to you, and how your advocacy work supports them through these
* How broader local and national contexts are influencing your work and the needs you're responding to

2. Your approach to advocacy and inclusion

We’ll consider:

* How you create a welcoming, safe environment for young people starting support
* How you make your service flexible and responsive, especially as relationships deepen over time
* Who delivers the work, including what experience and perspectives they bring (whether as paid staff, peer supporters, or volunteers), and how they are supported to do this work safely and well

3. Governance, voice, and leadership

We’ll assess:

* How people with lived experience help shape your organisation, including your services, direction, and leadership
* How decision-making reflects the values and communities you’re working alongside

4. Outcomes and impact

We want to understand:

* How you reflect on your work, what’s working well, what’s not, and how you adapt in response to feedback
* What difference your advocacy support is making now, and what you’re learning as you go
* What difference this funding would make to your organisation; we’re interested in how it would support your work, strengthen your organisation, or help you do things you couldn’t otherwise do

From this stage, we will make around 20 grants.

# 4. Funding details

The Shout! Fund expects to make around 20 grants of up to £240,000 over four years (up to £60,000 per year). We will fund up to 50% of your projected annual running costs up to this amount.

Our preference is to make flexible grants to your organisation to support the infrastructure that helps you deliver strong, sustainable advocacy. This might include core costs, including rent, utilities, and staff salaries, as well as costs associated with staff wellbeing.

We’re open to discussing further restrictions for the grant and funding where preferred or needed, as we understand that all of your work may not neatly align with this fund. What matters is that the funding supports the delivery of advocacy that reflects our key features.

We believe that fair pay is an important part of strong, sustainable organisations. We encourage applications that include realistic salary costs, annual salary increases, and measures that support the wellbeing of your team.

# 5. 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.

## Annual check-in call

Each year, we’ll arrange a call with you to hear how things are going and ask about your progress. We want to learn about:

* The progress and impact of your work
* Any successes you’ve had
* Any challenges your organisation or the people you support are facing

These conversations help us better understand the real impact of our grants and improve how we fund in the future.

As well as the call, we will require you to complete a short online form before releasing your next payment.

## Mid-grant visit

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

## Beyond the grant

We’ll offer opportunities to learn, connect, and influence collectively across the Shout! Fund’s cohort.

### Community of practice

We plan to bring together all grant holders to form a community of practice or consortium, supported by an independent facilitator. This will be a space where you can:

* Share learning and insights
* Discuss common challenges
* Speak to us collectively
* Explore new ideas and collaborate

### Additional opportunities

We’re also looking to offer extra funding to help you promote advocacy and show why it matters. This could include work like:

* Ethnographic research
* Storytelling projects
* Public awareness campaigns
* Other creative ways to highlight the value of advocacy

Participation in the community of practice or additional opportunities will be optional, and we’ll cover costs where needed.

# 6. 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 call back [on our website](https://henrysmith.foundation/contact-us/)
* Email us at [buildingindependence@henrysmith.foundation](mailto:buildingindependence@henrysmith.foundation)

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

## Read our FAQs

We’ve put together a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), which you can find [on our webpage](https://henrysmith.foundation/grants/shout/). We strongly recommend reading it before applying, as it covers lots of common questions about eligibility and how the fund works.

## Join our webinar

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

* Date: 1pm, Tuesday 22 July 2025
* Go to [the Webinar webpage](https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/909db406-8dc7-4197-941d-6405eba0bfda@8b63492b-8ac3-46f9-bc35-f7b7ceb0c214) to register

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

## Accessibility 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

2. Let us know the above details by:

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

3. 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 it, please get in touch. We’re happy to help.