

Outdoor Nurseries Social Enterprise Fund

Supporting childhood health, wellbeing and love of the natural world through play: funding criteria and guidance

Introduction

Inspiring Scotland strives for a Scotland without poverty or disadvantage. We want to create a Scotland where everyone, no matter who they are, has the same opportunities to reach their potential and lead happy and healthy lives. To do this, we help essential charities to become extraordinary charities, allowing them to better help the vulnerable and disadvantaged in our communities and transform our society. We have invested in play for nine years to improve childhood health and wellbeing through play for children across Scotland. During this time, we have developed a number of approaches, resources and models that maximise the impact and delivery of free play. Our focus over time has moved to outdoor play and learning as we have seen the additional and exponential benefits being outdoors brings to play. We have also seen how exposure to the natural world supports curiosity and sparks learning; crucially it creates an understanding and value of the natural world, which those children will be the custodians of in the future.

Inspiring Scotland, together with the Scottish Government, established Scotland's Coalition of Play and Learning to create a [National Position Statement](#) to which nearly 100 national organisations and leading academics have signed up. The statement identified 6 key ways in which play and learning outdoors is life-enhancing and provides the evidence to support the statement – the 6 points are:

- It improves the physical health of children and young people by increasing physical activity and equipping them with the skills and attributes essential for living a healthy and active life, thereby contributing to reducing health inequalities and supporting the aims of national health policies.
- It promotes mental, social and emotional wellbeing by helping to reduce stress, increase self-esteem and confidence, develop emotional resilience, and build children and young people's confidence in their own capabilities and ability to manage risks and deal with uncertainty.
- Importantly, it is fun! And through that fun, it promotes the development of essential social skills, helping children and young people to develop compassion and empathy and to build lasting and loving relationships.
- It supports wider learning by helping to boost creativity, imagination and understanding. These benefits are enhanced further when playing outdoors in diverse greenspaces and natural landscapes, particularly when the play is led by the child or young person. This provides multiple and enjoyable challenges and creates and enhances learning opportunities. It can also prepare children and young people for more structured learning, thereby supporting the aims of national education policies.
- It brings people together, connecting children and young people with their local areas and communities and helping to develop a sense of place and feeling of belonging and inclusion. It provides a wealth of opportunities for intergenerational activity, enhancing community cohesion, reducing social isolation, and helps to build inclusive, resilient communities.
- It is a powerful tool through which children and young people learn to understand the world around them and their place in it, creating a sense of ownership of all of Scotland's landscapes. Playing and learning

outdoors is essential for our children and young people to understand, value, enjoy and protect our natural world. It connects them to their environment, enhancing their appreciation and understanding of its physical properties and diversity.

Thanks to a generous donation from a supporter who wishes to remain anonymous, we have established a new Fund to offer seedcorn investment **to develop innovative approaches for the creation of a new generation of outdoor early learning and childcare (ELC) settings.**

Funding will be available for 12 to 18 months to support the establishment of new outdoor ELC settings.

This Fund is intended to target areas of very high deprivation where there is a clear need for ELC provision.

Please note that only existing charities that are currently social enterprises¹ or who plan to become social enterprises in the course of the funding year are eligible to apply.

The closing date for applications is midnight on **Friday 12 July 2019**. We want to support those making an application and we invite those who are considering applying to register their interest with us by e-mail to jo@inspiringscotland.org.uk – questions can also be submitted to Jo and we will circulate questions and answers to all those who have registered on 29 June and if further questions are submitted thereafter, we will circulate the answers to those on 5 July. A Performance Advisor will be available for one to one discussion about your application if required by telephone from 24 June to 10 July, by arrangement with Jo.

Eligibility

To be eligible for this Fund you must be a charity at the point of your application, and either be or plan to be a social enterprise within 12 months of being offered support from this Fund. The Fund has been established to provide seedcorn investment to develop innovative approaches to create a generation of outdoor early learning and childcare (ELC) settings. Funding will be available 12-18 months to support the establishment of new outdoor ELC settings for children eligible for funded hours (ie 3 -5 year old) within or delivering for deprived communities.

In scoring applications, priority will be given to those applications focused on deprived communities and in particular, applications that demonstrate a good understanding of and approach to addressing the needs and challenges of providing outdoor ELC in these circumstances. Scoring will also prioritise innovative approaches to provision of outdoor ELC. Consideration will also be given to the environmental impact of proposals.

The fund

The Outdoor Nurseries Social Enterprise Fund will provide financial and development support to eligible Scottish charities to establish a new, fully outdoors early learning and childcare setting (outdoor nurseries are interchangeable with outdoor ELC settings) serving a deprived community within Scotland. Applicants may find the following documents useful: [Out to Play](#), [My World Outdoors](#) and the [Care Inspectorate Knowledge Hub](#) in developing their application.

This investment will provide seedcorn funding to support the charity in its first 12 to 18 months of development/operating and can be used for set-up costs and/or running costs as it is very unlikely that an outdoor nursery will break even within its first year of operation. It may take between two and five years to

¹ While there is no legal definition of a social enterprise, you will need to have the ability to trade ie through charging for ELC provision which may require a change to your constitution which is something we can provide help with.

get to breakeven point and business plans should take this into account. There is currently no additional funding available from Inspiring Scotland after the period specified so applicants will need to consider this carefully. We advise early discussion with the relevant local authority as well as a good understanding of the demand locally for the service. Local authorities have set levels of fees they pay for ELC if providers are identified as partner providers. They may also have grants available for start-up costs and in some cases may provide some of the necessary equipment eg outdoor clothing for children.

The maximum amount of funding available is £60,000 per setting.

Support from Inspiring Scotland

As well as funding, successful applicants will receive capacity building support from Inspiring Scotland and a dedicated Performance Advisor. Performance Advisors are highly skilled and experienced staff recruited from senior positions across the private, public and third sectors. They include former managing directors, civil servants, social entrepreneurs, risk practitioners, lawyers, bankers and accountants, investment managers and charity sector leaders.

A Performance Advisor will work closely with each charity, providing individually tailored support, training and mentoring to help build the organisation's capacity and capabilities. The Performance Advisor can also draw on the experience within Inspiring Scotland's central functions including communications, project management, IT, finance and strategy.

In particular, we will work with funded charities to help them develop robust business plans, cashflow models and plans for future funding.

Those funded will have the opportunity to participate in a portfolio of charities funded by Inspiring Scotland where training opportunities, best practice, ideas and lessons learned can be shared.

In addition, charities will have access to our pro bono network of more than 350 professionals who work in the private sector and volunteer their time and skills free of charge to support our work. Our pro bono supporters range from lawyers, HR professionals and accountants to photographers, business mentors and marketing experts. They help our portfolio charities to address specific needs or build capacity.

Application process

Applications can only be made online at:

<http://sgiz.mobi/s3/094cbfba8b75>

The closing date for applications is midnight on Friday 12 July 2019.

Inspiring Scotland will undertake an assessment of your organisation and funding application. Our due diligence checking will cover standard elements such as governance, management, financial position, the evidence of need for your project, and your ability to deliver. We may contact you during this process for clarification.

Once review and due diligence are complete, funding decisions will be communicated to all applicants.

Application timeline

1. The application process will start on Monday 3 June 2019 with a closing date for applications of midnight on Friday 12 July 2019.
2. You can register your interest up to Monday 8 July 2019.
3. Questions asked will be shared amongst those registered on Friday 5 July (and if appropriate, further questions will be circulated on Friday 12 July).
4. There will be an opportunity to speak to a Performance Advisor about your application between 24 June and Wednesday 10 July.
5. Review and scoring of applications will take place between 15 and 24 July 2019.
6. We will undertake due diligence of applications that have scored well between 29 July and 5 August – being approached as part of this process does not mean you will definitely be funded.
7. We anticipate that funding decisions will be communicated to applicants by Friday 9 August 2019.
8. First meetings will be scheduled to take place in August with successful applicants.

Contact

If you have any questions, or need more information, please contact Inspiring Scotland on 0131 442 8760

www.inspiringscotland.org.uk