

Mental Health Sustainability Programme Helplines Fund with Bupa Foundation | FAQs



Overview

1. Will financial support be available as part of the Programme?

The Programme will administer a micro-grants scheme where funds will be available to support the sustainability of organisations, preferably by purchasing something tangible for the organisation.

We expect that provider organisations can access greater workforce capacity and support from the 'minutes' of the Programme and they can pre-register for the minute support by emailing mhsp@amhp.org.uk

2. Why are you only launching a small grants pot?

We have had reports from organisations that they are put off by larger sums of money as they feel it goes hand in hand with a lengthier application process and greater reporting requirement.

We feel this figure balances proportionality of risk with how to connect smaller providers with money that can be used and mobilised quickly.

3. Do you have enough money to give to everyone who applies?

We expect demand to be high and until we review what applications have come in, beyond the criteria as outlined, we cannot anticipate which organisations will be successful.

4. Why have you chosen to dedicate this funding to helplines?

Helplines have always been an important part of mental health service provision by the VCSE sector. For individuals with mental health needs, 'improved choice of delivery can help to promote confidence in accessing services and help to address wider communication barriers and problems that people have in engaging with formal mental health service provision'.¹

Eligibility

5. What if my organisation was only incorporated in 2021?

For this round, we ask that organisations have been operational and registered with Companies House/Charity Commission for at least 2 years by time of application (=registration on/before November 2019). If you do not meet this criteria, please do not apply.

6. What if we don't just support people with mental health illnesses/needs?

Mental health does not have to be your only focus - but it must be clear and explicit that it is a focus of yours. We should be able to ascertain this from your application (a track record of mental health service provision); backed by your website/Charity Commission listing etc.

It would not be suitable to say apply as provider whose service is financial advice or food bank provision where some service users have a mental health need; but are not targeted as the primary service user cohort nor seeing their mental health need directly addressed by way of access to your services.

¹ Howe S, Meakin B, Islam-Barrett F, 'Helplines at the Frontline of Health and Social Care', Helplines Partnership, Race Equality Foundation & Shaping Our Lives < <https://www.helplines.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Helplines-at-the-Frontline-of-Health-and-Social-Care.pdf>>, 2014

7. What if we don't just run a helpline? / How much of our service offer needs to be dedicated to our helpline?

You must have at least a helpline provision – though we understand you may support in other ways too. Provided you offer a helpline (*a service providing non-face-to-face advice, support and information via phone, email, text, SMS or online*) to the support of individuals living with mental health illnesses/needs, you would be eligible.

8. What if the income of my organisation is less than £25,000?

We took on feedback from our last round and we are pleased to have removed the lower limit for an organisation's income. We hope that we will hear from more exciting organisations who are doing innovative work with communities disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

Whilst we will need to see that you meet all eligibility criteria (such as being registered as a not-for-profit etc) and that you can evidence how this fund will support your organisation in the long-term, these criteria apply to all interested applicants.

9. My organisation has an income of greater than £250,000 – can I still apply?

We expect demand to be high and have concentrated this fund for organisations with a turnover of less than £250,000. You would be ineligible to apply if you had an income higher than this.

10. What if we have received funding from you in previous rounds?

If we have funded you before we are able to again on two conditions: 1) that you meet all eligibility and 2) that you had not used the grant previously made to direct benefit/cost attribution to your helpline. For further clarity, please email mhsp@amhp.org.uk

Application

11. What if I want to apply for staffing costs?

We understand the importance of what you are doing and what your organisation needs – and we want to contribute to support that. Therefore for this round, we are pleased to be able to cover up to 25% of your total application costs for core costs (inc. salaries) provided this is highlighted in your application: i.e. if you have applied for the cost of 10 workforce places on a mental health training course at £2,000, you may add no more than £500 of overheads (with a mandatory breakdown - £15/hour staff rate for 20 hours plus £200 office rent contribution) to this application for a total request of £2,500.

The £5,000 cap still applies so please ensure your application for non-core costs is no more than £4,000 in order to add up to £1,000 for core costs.

12. Can I apply for this fund to support new streams of work?

The fund can go towards anything that contributes to your sustainability. If you feel that after a period of review and evaluation through the pandemic, you will expand services in a different area/delivery method/etc. then we would be happy to read your application provided all other eligibility criteria were met.

13. Can I apply to cover income we have lost because of the pandemic?

This funding is not intended to replace lost income/hardship experienced by VCSE organisations as a result of the pandemic and we cannot provide retrospective funding for projects.

14. Can I apply via alternative means? Say if I do not feel able/comfortable to complete your online, written application.

We welcome people reaching out for a conversation which we can hold on Zoom or Microsoft Teams. Through this natural conversation we will seek to gain adequate information to allow the panel to understand your application, organisation and needs as fully as it would in the written word.

Please reach out to hayley@amhp.org.uk to arrange this. Please note that we will not have capacity to offer this to everyone and so we do need to hear from you as soon as possible to meet this need and give your application the time it deserves. The deadline will not be extended, and the Programme team can only be so flexible in arranging these kinds of appointments so please consider that when requesting adaptations.

We also have the form in Word doc format that you can request by emailing mhsp@amhp.org.uk

15. How do I apply for the grants?

The application form is online this year and will be advertised in due course.

If successful

16. When can I expect to be paid?

Decisions will be communicated to all applicants by late January 2022, with awards being credited to organisations in/by week commencing 6th February 2022.

There is an expectation that a signed grant agreement will be returned before funds are released and support from the awarded organisation will be needed to meet this deadline.

17. How soon will I need to spend the money?

We expect that funds are mobilised quickly and to truly support an organisation's the money should not be sat in reserves. We expect spend to be evidenced within 6 months of the award, and for the total spend to have been made within 12 months.

18. What monitoring requirement is there?

If your funding request is successful, we'd like to know about how it's made a difference – we will email you asking for a supporting statement on the use of the grant money, if/how it has increased the number of beneficiaries reached or your income, and any impact statements and photos that are indicative of its use.

We will not ask for financial reports or receipts on the assumption that you will spend money where it has the biggest impact on your organisation's sustainability and response to the pandemic.

We have assistance from our evaluation partner in reporting on the impact that these small grants have; we ask in our application form for information on revenue, as well as the number of beneficiaries reached. We will repeat the request for this data at later intervals to measure the impact via these two criteria. Moreover, we have a short evaluation form that aims to capture how the fund has contributed to your operations and particularly your sustainability. Completing this form is a requirement of the funding.

19. What else can I expect?

You will automatically be inducted into the Programme, gaining access to our peer support forum and webinar series as well as triage support from our Senior Programme Officer.

You will also receive membership to the Association, meaning you can add your important voice to a growing and diverse network of organisations committed to making a real difference to how mental health services are delivered. More about our membership can be found [here](#).

[FAQ webinar in July 2021 \(only those relevant to this current Helplines Fund round\)](#)

20. Question from our FAQ webinar: What is meant by sustainability, [particularly where this refers to] spending in a 6 month period?

For us, sustainability refers to not using this fund as a 'bandage' – it can relate to continuing to deliver online, or returning to face-to-face and putting in place adequate measures.

We are looking for costs that do not just plug a hole but allow you to continue to deliver your services long-term and that you continue to be there for your community as a service provider. Our aim is to support the sector to continue existing but also, to grow and strengthen.

21. Question from our FAQ webinar: What equips you to make case-by-case basis/discretionary decisions?

With the changing nature of the pandemic and England's response to such, means we must build in flexibility as a funder – this was a recurring piece of positive feedback we received around our approach from our December 2020 round.

We also feel our diverse grant making panel empowers us to make discretionary decisions that reach appropriate organisations, whilst allowing us to remain transparent and equitable.

22. Question from our FAQ webinar: Would this fund support [attendance of staff on training about] MHFA Awareness?

Provided you can show how you intend to use this training for the benefit of communities disproportionately affected by Covid-19, we would welcome seeing this as a cost in your application; however we may choose to connect you with MHFAE and the training through our existing relationship with them, rather than the funds at our own discretion.

23. Question from our FAQ webinar: Is there a maximum amount we can apply for specifically for equipment?

The maximum amount that anyone can apply for is £5,000, so in theory you could request that whole amount for equipment costs. However, if you have specific equipment requests e.g. make/model, we may ask for justification to support the specificity of your request.

24. Question from our FAQ webinar: What is the total amount we can apply for?

The maximum you can apply for is £5,000 and the total must be broken down with item costs.

[FAQ webinar in November 2021](#)

25. Question from our FAQ webinar: Can this fund be used to support online counselling or weekly virtual befriending (online over Zoom or the telephone)?

This fund is intended to support Helpline provision ONLY so this would not be eligible.

26. Question from our FAQ webinar: Can applications be submitted as partnerships with different organisations?

We are looking to support small grassroots providers and as such we will consider these applications on a case by case basis. The sustainability and impact of all the organisations in the consortia would need to be reflected in the application and all must meet the eligibility criteria (with the caveat that the consortia must have a combined turnover of less than £250,000).

27. Question from our FAQ webinar: We want to set up a helpline, would this be suitable for the fund?

An organisation looking to set up a helpline would be looked on less favourably by those whom are looking for funds to sustain existing helpline provision. We would need detail in your application about 1)

where the funding for the helpline would come from after a prospective award from us; 2) are you filling a gap of needs/local provision in setting up this helpline and/or why else are you expanding to deliver this helpline.

28. Question from our FAQ webinar: What makes an application stand out above others, and what typically fails applications?

We are looking for people to really show us impact and sustainability throughout their application – you can choose to do this in quantifiable terms (percentages for example) or with written feedback.

Generic statements (“we can reach more people”) do not give us as much to go on as expanded thoughts that relate to impact and sustainability do.

29. Question from our FAQ webinar: Our callers are anonymous – how can we evidence impact?

There may be ad hoc information you can gain from your ‘helpline handlers’ around their feedback; but perhaps this award can even support that means of capturing impact.

We can take impact form you in terms of length or numbers of calls or communications (and therefore your evidence of demand). Equally, how many calls you may miss would evidence what you can do with an award.

30. Question from our FAQ webinar: If we wanted to increase an employee’s contract to meet increasing demand, would this come under core costs?

This would indeed be an eligible core cost for us to approve and we would ask that you indicate and have the rest of your application speak to why this is your means of meeting increasing demand. You must also ensure you are following the £5,000 cap.

31. Question from our FAQ webinar: Would university students fit within supporting those with health inequalities exacerbated by Covid-19?

As young people, yes they would – and we are confident a strong argument could be made for University students as a whole cohort, to have been negatively impacted through the pandemic.

32. Question from our FAQ webinar: Would adults and children fit within supporting those with health inequalities exacerbated by Covid-19?

As children, yes they would. Adults would need to meet an additional criteria (i.e. disability, from a minoritised community, pregnant women, LGBTQ+ etc.).

33. Question from our FAQ webinar: Is support just for mental health or can it go wider – for example, would a housing/benefit advice line be eligible?

This fund, and our support, is for those who are classed as ‘mental health providers’ – this must be the primary reason for their service.

We understand there are lots of organisations who can draw a line between the provision of their services to improved mental health/wellbeing in the communities they serve (i.e. food banks, benefits advice, housing support) but (in the main) these services do not exist to address mental health needs as a primary focus. We recognise that support in these areas does benefit mental health but unless an organisation explicitly aims to address and improve specific mental health illnesses, they would not be eligible.

34. Question from our FAQ webinar: How can we arrange a video call submission?

Please email hayley@amhp.org.uk – we can then arrange to meet on the phone/video phone.

35. Question from our FAQ webinar: Will you fund national helplines, local helplines or both?

We are open to fund helplines that operate locally or nationally provided they meet the eligibility criteria – particularly here it is that they have a turnover of less than £250,000; the majority of their beneficiaries in England; and that they support communities disproportionately impacted by Covid 19.

36. Question from our FAQ webinar: You mention that core costs can form part of the application, are you ok with this being attributed to non-helpline staff?

We understand that work ultimately contributing to the success/impact of the helpline may be undertaken by a more 'generically' applicable staff member. Provided any staff costs were going towards either supporting the helpline or other costs you have applied for (i.e. if you have requested funds for an impact measurement tool, administrative/CEO staff time to familiarise yourselves with this equipment for example) would be eligible. The role does not have to be solely under the operation of the helpline.