

Masonic Charitable Foundation Hospice Grants 2025

Supporting people living in financial hardship

On behalf of Freemasonry in England and Wales the Masonic Charitable Foundation is proud to be working in partnership with Hospice UK to deliver a programme of local funding that will have a significant and lasting impact on communities across England and Wales.

Information and criteria

Introduction

An estimated 111,000 people die in poverty every year in the UK. Hospice UK's report: ["It's a nightmare scenario" - death, dying and financial hardship](#) finds that the significant financial and social needs of people facing financial hardship or living in socio-economic deprivation and their loved ones are not being met.

The report identified certain actions Governments, local systems and health and care services can take to reduce the number of people facing financial hardship or living in socio-economic deprivation at end of life, improve their experiences and the experiences of their loved ones.

One key aim of the report was to explore the relationship between financial hardship, socio-economic deprivation and hospice care. The report calls specifically on our sector to:

- ensure referral criteria and service provision take a truly holistic approach to palliative and end of life care. This includes social, financial and emotional needs.
- collaborate with organisations who support people facing financial hardship or living in socio-economic deprivation to ensure an integrated approach.

Hospices have told us that they want to make changes to better support people facing financial hardship or living in socio-economic deprivation and increase access to their services, including in areas of high deprivation within their catchment. But they often do not know where to start or do not have the time or resources for effective community engagement or service transformation.

The grants programme

This programme will support hospices to:

- work alongside people with lived experience and/or expert organisations to identify the barriers to their service experienced by people facing financial hardship or living in socio-economic deprivation and start to take tangible steps to breaking these down.
- build a greater understanding of the experiences of people in their community facing financial hardship or living in socio-economic deprivation as well as their experiences or assumptions of the hospice's services.
- identify ways their services can be adapted, improved or integrated to better support people facing financial hardship or living in socio-economic deprivation that are sustainable within current financial constraints.
- partner with local organisations to expand the hospice's reach, strengthen its service provision, improve the accessibility of services or maximise resources for people facing financial hardship or living in socio-economic deprivation.

Ultimately, this programme will enable hospices across the sector to design and deliver their services differently to make them more accessible, and offer better support, to people facing financial hardship or living in socio-economic deprivation.

Projects could include

- The following are examples of ways in which money from the grant could be used: Funding a collaboration or partnership that supports the:
 - assessment of the accessibility and quality of the hospice's services for people facing financial hardship or living in socio-economic deprivation and resulting tangible changes to services.
 - upskilling of hospice staff and volunteers on how to provide more holistic and individualised care to people facing financial hardship or living in socio-economic deprivation.
 - redesigning of hospice services or support to better support people facing financial hardship or living in socio-economic deprivation.
 - evidencing of the impact of changes made to hospice services or support to ascertain whether they have made your services more accessible and inclusive for people facing financial hardship or living in socio-economic deprivation.
 - Improvement in data collection of hospices around demographics related to ethnicity and people facing financial hardship or living in socio-economic deprivation.
- Funding the salary of a staff member responsible for implementing or embedding changes to hospice services and support identified as necessary to better support people facing financial hardship or living in socio-economic deprivation.
- Funding meaningful community engagement to identify or test changes that need to be delivered to your service.

The grant programme will seek to facilitate sustainable change in how hospice care is delivered. Grant recipients would be expected to assess the impact of the grant against their intended outcomes, which in turn would serve as case studies in an evaluation to support wider sector learning.

Grants

Grants of up to £40,000 are available to support projects running over a period of 18 months. This allows for up to 3 months setup phase and 12 months project delivery - with a further 3 months to cover any unforeseen delays mid project.

The grants will enable hospices to initiate or build on programmes of work that improve their support to people facing financial hardship or living in socio-economic deprivation or expand their access to services. This can be done in a number of ways:

- Meaningful community engagement to identify the barriers to accessing high-quality hospice services for people facing financial hardship or living in socio-economic deprivation in your catchment area and making tangible changes to your services to reduce these.
- Building lasting and sustainable partnerships with other services to better support or expand your support to people facing financial hardship or experiencing socio-economic deprivation.
- Embedding recommendations or findings from assessments of the ability of the hospice to provide holistic care and support to people facing financial hardship or living in socio-economic deprivation.
- Introducing an evidence-based intervention or tool that enables you to better support people facing financial hardship or living in socio-economic deprivation.
- Responding to and acting upon national policy or research evidence.

Expectation

If you are successful in your application for funding we would expect you to attend an early Project Leads Day to meet, develop your change ideas for testing and learning from each other. The days are facilitated workshops led by our Grants and Programmes Teams (which includes our clinical staff) to support project set up, troubleshoot, monitor and disseminate learning.

We will support Project Leads throughout the life of their grant, following a [Quality Improvement](#) (QI) approach. QI is a systematic methodology which enables staff to design, test, and implement changes using real time measurement for improvement.

We will also share the learning from projects that are funded through this programme. We may also select a small number of hospices for more formal grant evaluation. If successful in your application for funding, you will be expected to contribute to this.

Additional activities may include:

- submitting a written progress report every three months after your grant has been awarded, including baseline and ongoing impact data
- site visits by staff from Hospice UK to evaluate progress
- access to ongoing support from the Grants and Programmes Teams to ensure that your project goes as smoothly as possible and the offer of facilitation to help resolve any issues as they arise
- sharing of ideas and knowledge and peer support through a variety of media and attendance at project lead days and related events
- Contribution of data and outcomes to project evaluation framework
- Taking part in webinars that would form part of a Community of Practice for the duration of the grant period.
- Submitting an abstract for a poster presentation at Hospice UK national conference.

Available funding

Total available funding in this grant round is £400,000. We expect to award between ten and fourteen grants in this round.

Only one application can be considered from each hospice

Eligibility criteria

Eligible organisations are members of Hospice UK:

- adult hospices
- children's hospices.

Based in England, Wales, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man.

NB: Hospices awarded a grant in the April 2025 Masonic Charitable Foundation/Hospice UK Progressive Neurological Conditions grant programme are not eligible to apply in this round.

Deadline

The deadline for applications is Monday, 8 December 2025 at 17:00. Applicants will be informed whether or not they have been successful by early February 2026.

Financial situation

If we receive more applications than we can fund and the project has been assessed and is strong enough to be in contention for a grant, then hospices' free reserve levels may be taken into account.

For the purpose of this grant programme:

- free reserves are defined as all reserves with the exception of endowed or restricted funds and any reserves represented by tangible fixed assets
- running costs are defined as total expenditure as per the most recent audited accounts.
- where the hospice operates one or more trading subsidiaries, the figures are to be based on the consolidated levels of reserves and expenditure for the group.

User Involvement

We expect your project to have lived experience at its heart and ensure community, patient, family and carer voices are heard and acted upon. This should be evidenced in your application.

Evidence-based

We expect your project to be evidence-led and informed by data about your service and local population. This should be evidenced in your application.

Partnership working

We strongly encourage projects to be developed and implemented in partnership with others, e.g. people with lived experience, other health and care services, local organisations with a focus on supporting people facing financial hardship and living in socio-economic deprivation, community groups, health systems or local councils. This is to ensure changes that are made complement existing provision and are truly integrated in systemic plans to reach more people.

Where a project is a collaboration between a hospice and another provider (e.g. NHS or social care) the lead applicant must be a member of Hospice UK. **It is essential that letters of support from partners are submitted along with your application.**

Organisational support

The project lead will need dedicated time to undertake the proposed work and full support from the applicant organisation to execute necessary change to culture and practice.

The organisation will need to demonstrate that their commitment to improving access and quality of care for people experiencing financial hardship will continue beyond the end of the grant period.

The chief executive or equivalent at the hospice will be asked to write and sign a statement of support (on hospice headed paper) outlining how the proposed work fits with the strategic direction and business plan of the applicant organisation; provide assurance that this work will make a difference in practice and the organisation will take responsibility to review the progress of the project to ensure that change is effected; and describe any other support which will be provided.

Eligible costs

For the purpose of this grant programme, we consider a 'project' to be a discrete range of activities with a clear purpose, designed to bring about change. These activities would normally incur costs over a variety of items, which could include:

- Staff salary. Funding can cover full-time or part-time staffing, or a combination of both
- Equipment
- Travel
- Payment for people with lived experience
- Staff training.

Please note, if your application is successful, you should allow for the cost of travel to attend the Project Lead Day in your budget. This is usually held at Hospice UK offices in London.

What is not eligible?

Non-eligible pieces of work include:

- Projects that consist solely of scoping activities such as undertaking a needs analysis or mapping exercise with no actions taken in response to findings
- A continuation of an existing service - unless this application is to enhance or redesign this service
- Work that has already started before December 2025 - although if you ran a clearly identified pilot phase before this date, you are not precluded from making an application to develop it further
- Funding isolated pieces of equipment not related to the proposed work
- Providing direct salary costs for tasks not related to the project - the aim is to release the applicant from some of their duties to undertake the proposed work
- Projects run by hospices based in Scotland or Northern Ireland
- Projects run by NHS hospices.

Application process

We encourage all potential applicants, after reading the application materials, to contact the Grants Team to informally discuss your proposal. This enables us to establish whether your planned work fits within the general requirements of the programme and offers you an opportunity to find out more about what we are looking for.

Please note that discussing your proposal with the Grants Team does not guarantee the success of your application.

Only one application per grant round will be considered from each hospice. Applications can be made on the online forms available on our website: www.hospiceuk.org/grants

Completing the online form

Before you can access the online application form you will be asked several questions in the eligibility filter. If answered correctly, you will be directed to the full application form.

Tip, you may find it helpful to prepare your answers in Word first. A template of the application questions is available on the website in Word version. You can use the template to 'cut and paste' your answers into the online form.

When you are filling in your application form, please give concise answers as some questions may have a limit on the number of words you can write.

In addition, if a grant is awarded, we will ask you to report back on your project by referring to the answers written on your application form, so it is important to be realistic in your answers.

Submitting the online form

Once you have completed the application form you can submit it online. To submit, go to the last page of the form and at the bottom is a 'submit' button. Once you are happy with your application, click 'submit'.

Once you have submitted your application you will receive a confirmation of submission e-mail, which will include a copy of your application.

Please upload to your application:

- a signed statement of support on hospice headed paper from your chief executive
- letters of support from partner organisations (where appropriate)
- any other supporting information, such as a feasibility study or scoping exercise, that identifies the need for the project.

Assessment

Applications will undergo a two stage assessment process:

1. By Programme Staff

To check the application meets the basic eligibility criteria. If further information is required at this stage, a member of the programme staff will request it.

2. By the Major Grants Committee

During the second stage all applications will be considered by the Major Grants Committee, which comprises of senior hospice personnel as well as staff from Hospice UK and representatives from the Masonic Charitable Foundation.

Applications will be assessed against set criteria, including evidence that the proposed project will support people living in financial hardship. We will consider how the proposal will:

- **Engage, or be built on engagement, with local communities and organisations** to genuinely improve access and quality of palliative and end of life care delivered through hospices to people experiencing financial hardship or living in socio-economic deprivation.
- **Improve access and reach** in more socio-economically disadvantaged geographical areas covered by the hospice OR **improve the quality or accessibility** of hospice services to people living in socio-economic deprivation or experiencing financial hardship.
- **Address an unmet need** - with an understanding of how the needs of users have been incorporated.
- Demonstrate **partnership working** with other agencies to make use of their expertise, maximise resources or support greater integration of services.
 - You must submit signed letters of support from any significant partner organisations that you propose to work with
- Have high-level **organisational buy-in** i.e. evidence that this is in-line with your organisation's strategy
- Use **reliable outcome measures** to demonstrate the difference that the project makes to people experiencing financial hardship who need hospice care, their families and carers.
- Demonstrate how the key outcomes for the project will be able to be **sustained** after the end of the grant funded period.

In addition, **value for money** and the **feasibility** of the proposed work will be taken into account.

You should address each of the points above in your application. These are not listed in order of importance.

Tip: We will be looking for evidence of QI thinking in your application i.e. what problem are you trying to solve and your aim.

The Grants Committee will prioritise projects they feel would most likely contribute to national learning and the possibility of scaling and replicating your model in other settings.

To support this, your application should demonstrate how your project would build on established practice, be nationally relevant and show a clear need.

It may also be necessary to allocate funding to ensure a balanced geographical spread and project type are taken into account.

The Grants Committee will prioritise those projects that have the ability to start soon after the decision to fund has been announced.

It is likely that we will receive more applications than the amount of funding available, so the success of your application cannot be guaranteed and the committee's decision is final.

Supporting documentation for your application

You have the opportunity to submit supporting documentation to strengthen your bid. Examples of documentation you should consider including:

- evidence for why the activity proposed will have the impact we are looking for
- evidence of need for your proposed work in your locality
- information about partners and collaboration that will have an impact on the success of your project

What happens if successful?

If your application for a grant is successful then we will send an Award Letter, together with an Acceptance Form, to the Chief Executive at the hospice. We may contact the application sponsor personally to confirm support of your application.

The Acceptance Form must be signed by the applicant organisation's Chief Executive and a Trustee, agreeing to the conditions of the grant. We will ask you to confirm when the project will start and when you expect to complete it.

The project should start within three months and finish within 12 months of the date of the Award Letter. We reserve the right to withdraw funding after 18 months from the award date if it is not claimed, so it is important that you keep us up to date with progress.

Payments will be made on the submission of a Grant Claim Form together with evidence of expenditure such as copies of paid receipts and invoices in relation to the grant.

All grant holders will need to provide an evaluation of their project at the end of the funding period.

Once your project is complete

As a condition of your grant, you will be required to send us a final report at the end of the grant funded period of your project. You will be asked for further information about what you have achieved and what impact the work has had on the experience for patients and their families.

Timetable

An outline timetable for the programme is given below.

- 8 December 2025 - Deadline for submission of applications 17:00
- Early February 2026 - all applicants to be notified of decisions
- Early May - First progress report due from project leads
- Mid May - Project Lead Day (exact date TBC)
- September 2027 - Final Impact Reports due from project leads

Acknowledgements

Grant holders are required to acknowledge the Masonic Charitable Foundation, local masonic representatives and Hospice UK in any information that is circulated about the project. This includes e.g. conference presentations, reports, publications and articles that arise from the work.

Masonic Charitable Foundation

As the national charity of Freemasonry in England and Wales, the Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF) awards grants to tackle some of the most significant challenges in society.

Funded entirely through the generosity of Freemasons and their families, the MCF is one of the largest grant-making charities in the country.

We build better lives by enabling opportunity, advancing healthcare and education and promoting independence.

Hospice UK

Hospice UK is the national charity for hospice and end of life care. We work to ensure everyone affected by death, dying and grief gets the care and support they need, when they need it.

Further information

Please see our website or contact the Grants Team at Hospice UK with any questions about this grant programme or if you need further information:

E-mail: Grants@hospiceuk.org

Website: www.hospiceuk.org/grants

Telephone: 020 7520 8219

Address: Grants Team, Hospice UK, 34-44 Britannia Street, London, WC1X 9JG