

## Call for Evidence: National Lottery Good Causes – Fund What Matters To You

### Background

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has launched a [call for evidence](#) on the future of National Lottery good cause funding.

Since 1994, the National Lottery has generated more than £53 billion for good causes across the UK, supporting everything from elite and grassroots sport to cultural organisations and community projects. For the sport and recreation sector, this funding has played a vital role in supporting participation, facilities, workforce and the sustainability of organisations across the country.

The call for evidence provides an opportunity to consider how National Lottery funding can better reflect today's priorities, reach the communities and organisations that need it most, and reduce unnecessary bureaucracy. The Sport and Recreation Alliance welcomes the opportunity to contribute the sector's views and ensure the future funding model continues to recognise the significant social, economic and health benefits delivered through sport and recreation.

Below we have set out some suggested key messages under the relevant sections/questions from the call for evidence to help members respond directly to the consultation.

### ***Section: Empowering your communities to feel benefits***

*The government wants to ensure that all communities can access and benefit from National Lottery good cause funding.*

### ***Key questions:***

**Question 2.** *You said you have some awareness of how the National Lottery good cause funding has impacted your organisation or sector. What is the most positive impact you have seen to your organisation or sector from the funding?*

**Question 3.** *You said you have some awareness of how the National Lottery good cause funding has impacted your local area. What is the most positive impact you have seen to your local area from the funding?*

## **Section: Funding what matters to you**

*The government wants to understand the public's views on the current good causes and whether they reflect today's national priorities.*

### **Key questions:**

**Question 6.** Which of the following areas, if any, do you think should be prioritised for receiving National Lottery good cause funding? As a reminder, good cause funding should only be spent on projects and activities which do not typically receive core government funding - this is known as the additionality principle.

- 1. Arts and culture (e.g. funding for films, theatre, dance, music, literature etc.)
- 2. Sport (e.g. funding for grassroots sports clubs, sporting initiatives, Olympic teams etc.)
- 3. Heritage (e.g. funding to protect and promote historic buildings, public parks, community archaeology).
- 4. Funding for community-led initiatives (e.g. projects which tackle poverty, loneliness and support local charities etc.)
- 5. Health and wellbeing which excludes core NHS spending (e.g. funding for mental health support, local wellbeing initiatives etc.)
- 6. Education and skills which excludes core education spending (e.g. youth work, life skills, community training that opens doors to new opportunities etc)
- 7. The environment (e.g. local nature restoration, urban green spaces, tackling the climate crisis etc.)
- 8. Don't know

**Question 7.** In the last financial year, the National Lottery raised £1.7bn for good causes. This is currently distributed as follows: Arts and Culture (20%), Sport (20%), Heritage (20%), Charitable activities including health, education and the environment (40%). Considering this, what percentage of funding, if any, do you think each of these areas should receive? Your answers must add up to 100%.

- 1. Arts and culture
- 2. Sport
- 3. Heritage
- 4. Charitable activities including health, education and the environment

### **Key messages:**

- **National Lottery funding is essential to the long-term health and sustainability of sport from grassroots to elite. The evidence of this impact is clear:**
  - Since the National Lottery's inception in 1994, almost £9bn has been invested in sport through over 143,000 different projects. In total around £6.8bn has been invested in grassroots sport.
  - National Lottery funding has transformed high performance sport, helping Britain win over 1,200 Olympic and Paralympic medals since 1994.

- In 2025, over £228m of National Lottery grants supported over 4,000 grassroots sport projects across the UK through the provision of equipment, facilities and programmes.
- Every nation and region of the UK has benefitted from hundreds of millions of pounds of investment into sport since the National Lottery began.
- National Lottery funding has supported the development of our national sporting infrastructure including Wembley Stadium, Hampden Park and the Principality Stadium.
- **Sport must continue to be prioritised as a good cause.** Community sport delivers over £120bn of social value every year through improved health, wellbeing and community cohesion. In addition, sport contributes almost £100bn in direct economic output, equivalent to 2.5% of total economic output. Alongside Exchequer funding, continued National Lottery good cause funding for sport helps sustain this enormous social and economic value.
- **National Lottery funding is essential to tackling inequalities in participation.** While participation in sport and recreation has recovered post-pandemic, there remain substantial inequalities with women and girls, disabled people, people from diverse communities and people from disadvantaged backgrounds far less likely to be active. National Lottery investment into national programmes and local communities helps to tackle inequalities and open up opportunities for people of all backgrounds to participate in sport.
- **The share of National Lottery funding going to sport should be maintained and ideally increased.** The existing share of National Lottery funding going to sport should be at the very least maintained as now at 20% and ideally be increased. If there is a decision to change the shares, a 25% share across all four good cause areas would ensure each area is treated equally and also reflect the significant contribution sport makes to achieving improved health and educational outcomes and to supporting broader charitable purposes.

### ***Section: Empowering communities to take decisions***

*The government wants to ensure that communities across the country have the opportunity to access and benefit from good cause funding.*

#### ***Key questions:***

***Question 10.*** As you may know, National Lottery good cause funding is currently spent on both large-scale national projects and small-scale community-level projects. When making decisions on how to spend the funding, to what extent do you think large-scale national projects or small-scale community-level projects should be prioritised?

- 1. Local projects should receive lots more
- 2. Local projects should receive slightly more
- 3. Both should receive roughly the same amount

- 4. National projects should receive slightly more
- 5. National projects should receive lots more
- 6. Don't know

**Question 11.** *From the following options, how do you think National Lottery good cause funding would be best spent across the UK?*

- 1. Funding should be primarily focused on communities with the greatest need (e.g. areas with higher poverty, fewer public services or facilities)
- 2. Funding should be primarily focused on all communities regardless of need
- 3. Funding should be primarily focused on higher profile or national projects (e.g. national museums, Olympic sports, UK films)
- 4. None of the above
- 5. Don't know

**Question 15.** *We are aiming to make good cause funding more participatory, inclusive and representative for communities across the UK. How best do you think the National Lottery and the 12 National Lottery Distributor Bodies, who distribute lottery funding to grant recipients, could give your community more of a say over where good cause funding goes?*

#### **Key messages:**

- **Continued National Lottery funding at both national and local level is essential.** National organisations such as NGBs provide the critical national infrastructure for sport to take place at local level in clubs and communities.
- **National funding ensures consistent standards in every local community** – supporting good governance, clear safeguarding standards and the provision of safe, inclusive and welcoming places for people to participate.
- **National bodies provide strategic oversight to maximise the impact of investment.** National bodies such as NGBs are well connected into their club networks and are best placed to ensure National Lottery investment is targeted where it is needed locally and aligned with existing programmes and investments designed to grow participation.
- **Continued national level investment into major events and high performance sport is essential.** National Lottery funding for major international sporting events such as the Olympic and Paralympic Games, World Cups and major international championships is vital to ensuring the UK maintains its global position as a host nation and to leveraging such events to drive long-term participation and social impact. Similarly, continued investment into high performance sport and individual athletes will ensure Britain can maintain its rich tradition of success on the world stage and inspire more people to become sporting stars of the future.
- **Devolving more National Lottery funding to local level may risk fragmentation and inefficiency.** Where funding is devolved to more local level, this should be within a

framework which ensures national bodies can maintain strategic oversight and connect local funding to national programmes and investments.

- **Direct National Lottery funding for local clubs and communities remains essential** – ensuring that National Lottery money meets the needs of local people and communities while complementing other national or strategic investments e.g. into facilities.

### ***Section: Simplifying access to funding***

*The government wants to improve efficiency and ensure that everyone can access the funding they deserve.*

#### ***Key questions:***

**Question 24.** *Based on your or your organisation's experiences, what changes, if any, would you like to see made to the process of applying for National Lottery good cause funding?*

**Question 25.** *Which of the following, if any, would most encourage you or your organisation to apply for National Lottery good cause funding? Please select all that apply.*

- 1. Confidence that my application would be successful
- 2. Clear eligibility criteria
- 3. Simple and easy application process
- 4. Opportunity to work with the National Lottery
- 5. Positive testimonials from successful applicants
- 6. High success rates of applications
- 7. Access to supportive resources / templates when applying
- 8. An accessible application process (e.g. different languages, methods of applying)
- 9. The opportunity to access extra funding / money
- 10. Other (Please specify) [free text box]
- 11. Nothing would encourage me to apply for funding
- 12. Don't know

**Question 26.** *Which of the following, if any, would you say are the biggest barriers that you or your organisation would encounter when thinking about applying for National Lottery good cause funding? Please select all that apply.*

- 1. Lack of confidence that an application would be successful
- 2. Unaware of good cause funding opportunities
- 3. The application process would be complex
- 4. Unsure whether we'd be eligible for the funding
- 5. Lack of time to apply
- 6. Competition for funding would be too high
- 7. Too much documentation/admin would be needed
- 8. Limited access to necessary technology needed to apply
- 9. Language barriers when applying
- 10. Previous experiences of being rejected for funding

- 11. Subsequent reporting obligations too demanding
- 12. No need to apply/don't need the funding
- 13. Other (Please specify) [free text box]
- 14. There are no barriers to applying
- 15. Don't know

**Question 27.** *How do you think the National Lottery and the 12 National Lottery Distributor Bodies, who distribute lottery funding to grant recipients, could encourage more people that are eligible to apply for good cause funding? What more could they be doing?*

**Key messages:**

- **Applying for National Lottery funding should be as simple as possible.** Most grassroots clubs are entirely volunteer-run and do not have staff to complete complex funding applications. In this context, simple, clear, standardised application processes alongside clear guidance and tools for applicants would help reduce the time and bureaucracy associated with applying for funds.
- **Application processes should take account of the diversity of local communities and the needs of volunteers** – application forms, guidance etc should be made available in accessible formats, different languages etc.
- **More should be done to raise awareness of National Lottery funding for sport at local level with efforts targeted towards communities that are currently less likely to be active.** This would help broaden and diversify the potential pool of applicants and reduce the likelihood of applications coming only from those organisations that have existing awareness and experience of the funding system.