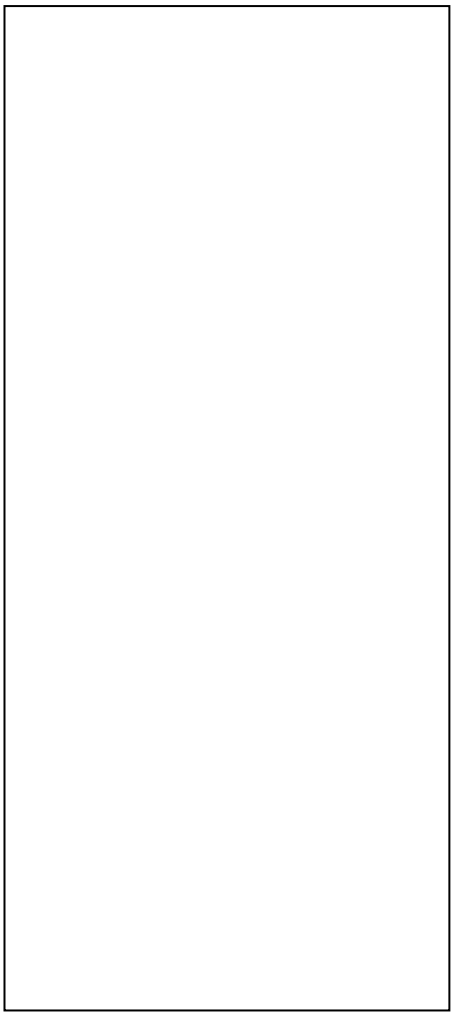

Community
Foundation
LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND



Leicestershire and Rutland Community Foundation is committed to the IVAR Open and Trusting principles. We want this fund to be accessible, fair and proportionate.

This means we will:

- Be clear and transparent about what the fund can and cannot support, how applications will be assessed and how decisions will be made.
- Keep the application process proportionate to the size and type of grant being requested. We will not ask for information or evidence unless it is needed to make a fair and informed decision.
- Trust applicants to tell us about their circumstances and plans. We will consider the information you provide in the context of your individual situation and will not expect every applicant to have the same level of experience, resources or formal documentation.
- Value lived experience where it can impact business potential, as well as existing qualifications and track record.
- Be open about our decisions. When we are unable to fund an application, we will aim to explain why and, where possible, signpost applicants to other sources of advice, funding or support.
- Welcome questions. If you are unsure whether your idea is eligible or what information to provide, we encourage you to contact us before applying.
- Work with applicants in a spirit of partnership. We want to understand what you are trying to achieve and how funding could help you overcome barriers and make progress.

If you are awarded a grant, we will agree clear and realistic expectations for monitoring and reporting with you, and we will take a proportionate approach to changes that arise during the grant period.

We will continue to review and improve the fund based on feedback from applicants and grant recipients, as well as the impact on their business/employment.

- An action plan and timeline for how they will spend the grant, with key activities
- For business grants, this will be in the form Business Plan or similar plan (proportionate to the size of the grant). It should include the gap or need that their business meets, and how the grant will help the business develop.
- For education grants, this will be details of their course and when it runs, and why it will help the applicant progress.
- All applicants at this stage will need to add a full budget breakdown and a clear summary of their future plans.

- Evidence of match funding (if applicable)
- Supporting evidence (quotes, course details, customer reviews etc.)
- For business grants over £5,000, a statement of how you see your business can have a benefit for the economic health of Leicester/Leicestershire/Rutland

Applicants will be invited for a conversation with the grant panel about their proposal.

The purpose is for the panel to understand your plans and give you the opportunity to explain your proposal in your own words. It will take place in a supportive atmosphere: the panel are interested in your work.

If you have a disability, caring responsibility, communication need or other circumstance that may affect your participation, please let us know; we will make reasonable adjustments.

Applicants will be asked about:

- What you are hoping to achieve
- What you have already done to progress your business or training

- Your experience and any qualifications
- What you plan to do with the grant
  to you/your business/customers and for grants over £5,000, to the economic health of our area
- Your support networks
- The challenges or risks you have identified
- Your next steps and how you will measure progress

A strong application does not need to be written over many pages or in formal or technical language; brief and clear is welcome. We are likely to look for applications that clearly explain:

- **Your situation:** What are you doing now, and what are you hoping to achieve?
- **Your motivation:** Why is this opportunity important to you?
- **The barrier or challenge:** What is currently preventing you from progressing, starting your business or accessing training or other funding?
- **Your plan:** What will you use the funding for, and what will you do with it?
- **The difference the funding will make:** What will be possible because of this grant that would not otherwise happen? What need or gap will it meet? How will it benefit Leicester, Leicestershire or Rutland?
- **Your commitment:** What have you already done to move towards your goal? This could include research, gaining experience, developing your idea, finding customers, completing training or investing your own time or money.
- **Your next steps:** What do you expect to happen in the next 6–12 months?
- **Sustainability:** How will you continue to make progress after the grant has been spent?

We understand that applicants will be at different stages. You do not need to have everything figured out, and you do not need to have a long track record of success. We will consider the potential of your idea alongside the circumstances you are facing.

You do not need to tell us what you think we want to hear. Please be honest about the challenges you face, the risks involved and the areas where you may need further support. We would rather understand your situation clearly than receive an application that presents an unrealistic picture.

SECTION	POINTS	WEIGHTING	TOTAL
Evidence of Prior Investment	5	x5	25
Viability and Sustainability	5	x5	25
Use of Funds	5	x4	20
Skills and Support	5	x3	15
Priority Need	5	x3	15
TOTAL			**100**

SCORE	WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE
5 (Excellent)	Clear, strong evidence of significant personal investment. Applicant has: Spent their own money (£500+), Invested many hours (100+ hours), Bought equipment or materials, Got paying customers or clients already, Clear progression shown (before/after evidence), Can describe specific milestones achieved
4 (Good)	Good evidence of investment. Applicant has: Spent some of their own money (£200-500), Invested reasonable time (50-100 hours), Made tangible progress, Can describe what they've done so far, Evidence is mostly clear
3 (Adequate)	Some evidence of investment. Applicant has: Spent a little money (£50-200) OR invested significant time, Started work on the idea, Can describe some progress, Evidence is present but could be clearer
2 (Limited)	Weak evidence of investment. Applicant has: Minimal financial investment, Vague about time invested, Early stage with little visible progress, Hard to verify what's been done so far
0-1 (Very Poor)	No clear evidence of investment, OR the application suggests this is a completely new idea with no prior work started