



## Happiness Hubs Fund Guidance Notes

**We strongly recommend you read these notes fully before submitting your application.**

Pioneering Care Partnership (PCP) is pleased to launch the next round of Happiness Hub Grants. Happiness Hubs are funded by North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (NENC ICB). This funding is part of the wider Community and Crisis Mental Health Transformation Fund and provides one-off grants for voluntary and community organisations to launch new activities or extend opening hours. **This round is only open to organisations that have not previously benefited from a Happiness Hub Grant.**

### Funding Aim

Recognising the need for people to have a safe space when they are experiencing poor mental health **Happiness Hubs aim to provide a 'Safe Haven' for people and their carers where they can connect and talk with others**, often whilst undertaking activities to promote wellbeing or resilience. The aim is for Happiness Hubs to be able to provide ongoing activities and support and therefore staff or volunteers must commit to undertaking mental health awareness training and also encourage peer support through engaging with people who have lived experience. Key evaluation criteria for all projects must be:

- 75% of participants report increased confidence, self-esteem or wellbeing
- 70% of participants report improved mental health.

### What is a Happiness Hub/Safe Haven

Happiness Hubs must aim to support physical and emotional wellbeing, and mental health through the provision of activities that are open to anyone on an ongoing basis. They can be referral or drop-in based.

Staff and volunteers providing these activities/groups/drop-in session should have mental health training i.e. Mental Health First Aid Training (or should be completed within the first 3 months, support can be provided in accessing training from the Happiness Hubs Team). Staff/Volunteers should be able to support individuals using the service and refer individuals as required to other means of support externally. We are looking for projects that can create a safe space for people to talk about their mental wellbeing.

In particular they must be permanent spaces that support individuals' health and wellbeing by connecting them to various resources and services within their communities.

Projects should provide access to:

- A regular designated safe space
- General amenities/refreshments
- Social activity
- Information and advice, i.e., mental health, welfare etc.
- Referrals to support
- Work with a range of providers to deliver support

## Geographic Area

This funding covers County Durham, all projects must be delivered in this geography for residents of County Durham.

## Targeted Audience

Happiness Hubs grant applications should support adults, over 18.

## Maximum Grant

You should apply for a grant between £5,000- £10,000. All applicants must be able to demonstrate they comply with the Real Living Wage. [For the real cost of living | Living Wage Foundation](#). Match funding of at least 30% is a requirement for all applications.

The current round of funding to be awarded is £95,000.

## Project Start Date and Length

We will be looking for projects that can commence between October and December 2025. This allows time for the approval process. We will not fund projects retrospectively.

The minimum project duration must be 12 months. The provider must be able sustain the project beyond the initial funding period and provide a plan on how they will do this as part of their application.

## Eligible Expenditure

Funding can be spent on revenue costs only and these must be realistic and proportionate, this includes:

- Staffing costs (see Real Living Wage note above)
- Volunteer expenses
- Training for staff and volunteers around mental health first aid, awareness etc.
- Room hire
- Refreshments - limited to £1.50 per head for beverages and snacks
- Food – limited to £5 per head however this must be for a substantial hot meal
- Activity resources
- Small equipment
- Management and administration fee (capped to 15%)

## Ineligible Expenditure

- Capital costs
- Utility costs and other bills
- Transport/Travel
- Retrospective expenditure
- Repeat projects.
- Projects that do not start within 6 months of the date of the grant offer letter.
- Events
- Reclaimable VAT.

## Application Hints & Tips

- All forms must be typewritten (Handwritten application will not be accepted).
- Choose a name for your project that is self-explanatory.
- Be specific about what you plan to do.
- Write in plain English. Use short sentences and avoid acronyms and jargon. You are describing your work to someone who may have never met you or seen what your organisation does. There is a maximum word-count so be succinct.
- Review the priorities and specific impact criteria. Make sure that your project description clearly demonstrates how your project will meet these.

- Include all the information requested in the application. Missing information could mean your application is rejected automatically.
- Make your budget as specific, give a full breakdown of costs.
- Your project may be fantastic however, if it is not submitted on time it will not be considered, please ensure your application arrives on time.

## Marketing and Promotion

All successful projects will receive promotional branding and this must be used when promoting your service. Any marketing or promotion must also include:

1. Acknowledgement of the NENC ICB, ideally including a link to the ICB social media.
2. Reference to PCP, ideally including a link to the ICB social media.
3. Links to relevant support, as directed by the Happiness Hubs team or DCC Public Health.

All providers must promote key national campaigns including Mental Health Awareness Week and Time to Talk Day.

In addition to quarterly reporting, you will be required to provide at least two detailed case studies during the duration of your grant.

Your project will be added to a list of Happiness Hubs that will be shared with key stakeholders to enable referrals to the project.

## Reporting Requirements

Yes, we will require quarterly update reports on how the funding is being spent and what activities are taking place. At the end of the funding period a final evaluation report must be completed, evidencing the spend and impacts of the project. Panel members are also encouraged to visit projects, this would be arranged by the fund administrative team.

## Can I apply for more than one grant?

No only one grant application will be accepted per provider.

## Key dates:

- a. **Training and support sessions:** Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> July, Friday 11<sup>th</sup> July, Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> July
- b. **Closing date for applications:** Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2025
- c. **Panel date:** August 2025.
- d. **Happiness Hub start dates:** 1<sup>st</sup> October onwards

## Help and Support

In addition to the support sessions you can contact the team via [Happiness.Hubs@pcp.uk.net](mailto:Happiness.Hubs@pcp.uk.net) to support you with the application process.

## Returning Your Application Form

Via email to [Happiness.Hubs@pcp.uk.net](mailto:Happiness.Hubs@pcp.uk.net) or postal address Happiness Hubs, , Pioneering Care Partnership, Carers Way, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 4SF

## The Assessment Process

- You submit an application and we will acknowledge its receipt.
- Your application will be reviewed to check eligibility and ensure nothing is missing – we may contact you if we need clarify any details.
- Your application will then be scored by a panel, who will agree which projects to fund.
- If the panels have any questions about your application you will be contacted for clarification, the panel may want to meet you to find out more about the project.

## Application Scoring

When completing your application please ensure you are clear about:

- Outputs: the number, demographic etc of people you plan to support.
- Outcomes: the quantifiable difference the project will make (see above for key outcomes)
- Activities the project is going to deliver and how you are going to do it.
- Who's involved in delivery, what support they will provide and their training or experience.
- What you hope to achieve longer-term for the people/communities.
- The costing of your project and its sustainability.
- Impact, with a clear focus on improving mental health and wellbeing.

The panel will look at 5 areas when scoring your application:

1. Project outline
2. Evidence of need
3. Costings
4. Sustainability
5. Overall fit with the fund guidelines

Each area is scored between 1 to 5. The minimum pass mark for funding is 15, or 50% of the possible total score. Please note: achieving a score of 15 or 50% of the total score does not guarantee your funding. If a funding round is oversubscribed projects with the highest mark will be awarded a grant.

Please see the following pages for a fuller explanation of how projects are scored.

## 1. Project Outline

Scoring Criteria				
1	2	3	4	5
Does not fully explain the project activities and fails to make the connection to mental wellbeing	Gives a brief overview of the project and does not fully link to how its supports mental wellbeing	Gives details of the project activities, who it will support and demonstrates how the project will support mental wellbeing.	Gives a good overview of the project activities, support provided and by whom and links well to mental wellbeing and how this project will support.	Detailed overview of activities, and how they will support the community wellbeing longer-term. Information was provided on who is supporting and their relevant experience and how the project links to external partners.

## 2. Evidence of Need

Scoring Criteria				
1	2	3	4	5
Does not fully explain the need for the project and makes no link to mental health.	Gives a brief overview of the need for the project but doesn't provide any supporting facts or evidence to back the statements. Or is weak in linking the project to mental health.	Gives a brief overview of the need for the project and provides limited facts or evidence to support statements. Link made to mental health.	Gives a good overview of the need for the project. Provides clear facts or evidence from more than one source to support statements. Link made to mental health.	Excellent overview of the need for the project. Provides facts or evidence from multiple sources to support statements, including own local research within the community about what they want and how this project meets that. Explanation is fully linked to mental health.

## 3. Project Costs

Scoring Criteria				
1	2	3	4	5
No match funding. Does not fully explain how the money will be spent. Costs are considered excessive or unrealistic and do not fit the fund.	Limited explanation about how the spent. Brief explanation about the situation regarding match funding. Costs are considered excessive or unrealistic and do not fit the fund.	An adequate explanation regarding match funding has been provide. Some detail has been provided as to how the fund will be spent. Costs are considered ok and not unrealistic and generally fit with the fund.	Gives a clear explanation regarding match funding. Has broken down most of the costs by providing details. Costs are considered ok and not unrealistic and contain a fit with the fund, i.e. the panel did not remove anything.	Full match funding explanation, including what has been secured, how long for, or what has been applied for and when the outcome is expected and how long that funding will last. Has fully broken down all the costs by providing concise details. Costs are fully realistic and fit with the fund. Nothing is removed by the panel. Clear consideration has been given when costing the project to its sustainability

#### 4. Sustainability

<b>Scoring Criteria</b>				
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
No explanation about how the project will be sustained beyond the Happiness Hub grant period.	Vague generalisations about how the project will be sustained beyond the Happiness Hub grant period.	Some explanation about how the project will be sustained. However, there is limited detail about how that will be achieved.	Gives a clear explanation of how the project will be sustained. With some detail about how that will be achieved. There is evidence that there is a plan in place	Gives a full explanation of how the project will be sustained and there is a clear plan that shows what actions will be taken to achieve this. The plan gives consideration to the largest costs for running the project beyond the Happiness Hub grant period.

#### 5. Overall Fit

<b>Scoring Criteria</b>				
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Does not fit with the grant guidelines.	Vaguely fits with grant guidelines	Fits with the grant guidelines but the project is not fully explained. There are gaps within the application, as the details to address criteria 1 to 4 of the scoring process is limited (scoring no higher than 3).	There is a clear link between the project and the grant guidelines. The project is clearly explained. There are gaps within the application, as the details to address criteria 1 to 4 of the scoring process are mixed.	The project is fully explained and linked to the grant guidelines. The project is clearly explained and there are no gaps within the application, as the details fully address criteria 1 to 4 of the scoring process.

## General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

Information stored about applications, panel decisions and project outcomes and reports will be stored by PCP. PCP's IT systems are managed and monitored by SmartIT.

Data stored in relation to this fund and its applications will be shared with the commissioner; North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board and Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat as part of the process of administering and reviewing this grant.

This data will be retained in line with Statutory Financial requirements.

## Information Sharing

As part of the assessment process the panel may share details of your application with other grant giving organisations in County Durham, this is to reduce duplication. We may also suggest to other grant funders that they might want to work with organisations to develop projects further or to consider joint funding arrangements.

We will share information of successful applications with the NENC ICB and this information may also be shared with the 111-2 mental health line, Durham Constabulary and Local Link Workers/Connectors or Social Prescribers, in order for them to refer people to the Happiness Hub/Safe Haven.

If you do not want your information to be shared as described above, please contact [Happiness.Hubs@pcp.uk.net](mailto:Happiness.Hubs@pcp.uk.net)

## Pioneering Care Partnership (PCP)

PCP is a multi-award winning charity whose mission is 'Health, Wellbeing and Learning for All'. PCP aims to support people by creating opportunities to improve health, wellbeing and quality of life for people disadvantaged by disability, age, ill health and/or caring responsibilities, and reduce inequalities in health overall.

Established in 1998, PCP has grown as a charity to meet developing community need and supported over 450,000 people.

PCP aims to deliver:

- Services that build capacity with individuals and communities to improve their own health and wellbeing, and to have greater choice and control;
- Services that tackle health inequalities; and
- Locally accessible services in community settings.

To find out more about PCP please visit our website: [www.pcp.uk.net](http://www.pcp.uk.net)

**Registered Office:** Pioneering Care Centre, Carer's Way, Newton Aycliffe, Co. Durham DL5 4SF  
**Company number:** 03491237 **Charity number:** 1067888