



VICTIMS SUPPORT PROGRAMME 2026 – 2028

Health and wellbeing support and services for
victims and survivors of the Troubles/conflict

SMALL GRANTS
Funding of £30K or under per annum

Application Guidance

This guidance note is applicable to those applicants who wish to apply for under £30K per annum only.

For those applying to for grants in excess of £30K please refer to the Victims Support Programme 2026-28 Application Guidance.

This SMALL GRANTS Application Guidance document should be read alongside the Victims Support Programme 2026-28 Strategic Context and Background Information (Small Grants) document.

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1. Overview of the application process

The Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) is opening a funding call for applications to deliver health and wellbeing support for victims and survivors of the Troubles/conflict [\(as defined by the 2006 order\)](#) through the **Victims Support Programme 2026 – 2028**.

Detailed information on the Victims Support Programme 2026-28 is set out in **Section 5 of the Victims Support Programme 2026-28 Strategic Context and Background Information (Small Grants)** document.

It is advised that organisations proposing to submit a small grants funding application read all detail in this document thoroughly alongside the Victims Support Programme 2026-28 Strategic Context and Background Information (Small Grants) document

Organisations must ensure they are familiar with the Small Grants application process and aware of all deliverables.

VSS retains the right to extend this Victim Support Programme beyond March 2028 in line with the outcome of this funding call.

2. Funding period, expected programme value¹ and eligible area²

Funding period

- Funding applications can be submitted for projects for a two-year period covering 1 April 2026 – 31 March 2028.

Expected Programme Value

- Year 1 £7.9m
- Year 2 £8.0m

Eligible Area

- The Victim Support Programme is open to applications from organisations who are located within Northern Ireland.
- Health and wellbeing support and services can be provided to victims and survivors who are resident outside of NI, through organisations located in NI.

Funding applications should align to the VSS service delivery model outlined within Section 4 of the **Victims Support Programme 2026-28 Strategic Context and Background Information (Small Grants)** document.

This call seeks to achieve **regional cover** for support and service provision throughout NI. In addition, it seeks to ensure that there is a **wide range** of community and voluntary organisations providing support and services to victims and survivors to offer maximum accessibility.

Project delivery must be **realistic** and **offer value for money** with a **clear and demonstrated focus** on improving the **health and wellbeing** of victims and survivors.

Small Grant applications must not exceed £30,000 per annum.

¹ Programme value in 2024/25 - £7.4m. Programme value in 2025/26 - £7.7m.

² Organisations will be required to specify the postcode area or areas where your proposed project will be delivered.

3. What areas of support can organisations apply to deliver?

The Victims Support Programme welcomes Small Grant applications for projects to deliver **Social Support (Social Connection) activities** for victims and survivors.

All organisations applying to deliver any or all these areas of support must adhere to the following:

- the CVS [Standards for Services Provided to Victims and Survivors](#) and [CVS Clinical Governance Standards](#)
- the [VSS Clinical Governance Framework](#); and
- the [VSS Guidance Note on Corporate Governance](#)

The Commission for Victims and Survivors (CVS) updated its standards for services provided to victims and survivors in June 2025.

Compliance with the CVS Standards and both frameworks will be reviewed as part of pre-contract checks for successful applicants before a Letter of Offer is issued.

4. What can the Victims Support Programme fund?

The Victims Support Programme can fund all the direct social support activity costs and make a reasonable contribution towards the overheads of running your organisation. The Victims Support Programme will not fund staff costs for Small Grants of £30k or under.

For further information on what can and cannot be funded, see **SMALL GRANTS Annex A: What the Victims Support Programme can and cannot fund.**

5. Who can apply?

Any legally constituted charitable organisation located in NI is eligible to apply to the Victims Support Programme provided they can demonstrate at least **5 years' experience** in the delivery of health and wellbeing support and services to victims and survivors of the Troubles/conflict. This can be demonstrated in two ways:

1. That they are organisation in receipt of funding through a VSS Victims Support Programme Letter of Offer in 2025/26;³

or

2. Within the application form, demonstrate and evidence at least **5 years' experience** in the delivery of health and wellbeing support and services to victims and survivors of the Troubles/conflict⁴.

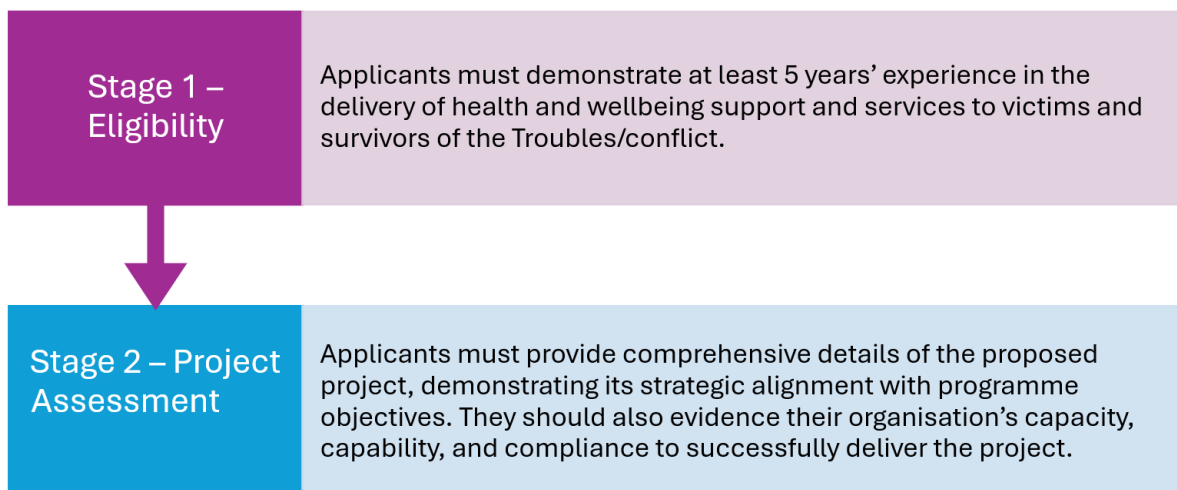
6. Who cannot apply

Applications from the following list cannot be accepted for project funding from the Victims Support Programme.

- Individuals
- Local Authorities
- Statutory bodies for activities which fall within their statutory remit

7. The application process

The application process has **two stages**:



³ Organisations currently in receipt of funding from VSS automatically demonstrate 5-years' experience of delivering health and wellbeing support to victims and survivors. All applicants will be subject to the same assessment process regardless of which eligibility criteria they meet.

⁴ As defined within [The Victims and Survivors \(Northern Ireland\) Order 2006](#).

Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria at Stage 1 will not proceed to Stage 2 for further assessment. Applicants will be informed of the outcome in November 2025.

Unsuccessful applicants will have the option to appeal this decision and should refer to **[SMALL GRANTS Annex B: Appeal of application outcome decisions](#)**.

How to apply

Small Grant Applicants are required to **complete and submit the following four documents**:

1. Victims Support Programme 2026-2028 **Application Form (Small Grants)**
2. Application Form Appendix 1 (Small Grants) – Management Committee/Trustee Board membership details
3. Application Form Appendix 2 (Small Grants) – Other sources of income
4. Victims Support Programme 2026-2028 **Delivery Plan and Budget Workbook** (Small Grants)

Please email all four required documents for a complete application to: communitypartnership@vssni.org.

The deadline for applications is **Thursday, 6 November 2025 at 12:00 noon**.

Information to support decision making should be **clearly demonstrated** within the application form.

Please note the following in respect of submitting your application:

- You **must** submit all **application documents electronically**.
- Hard copies **cannot** be accepted.
- If you require technical support to **submit this application electronically**, please contact VSS on 02890 279100.
- We recommend that **you request a read receipt** to ensure that that your email has been received by VSS.
- Please contact us to confirm receipt if you do not receive an email confirmation from VSS within 24 hours of submission.
- **Applications received after 12 noon Thursday 6th November 2025 will not be accepted.**

8. Support available

Information sessions

VSS will hold three information sessions to provide a comprehensive overview of the Victims Support Programme 2026-28 and explain the assessment process.

These will take place at the following locations:

Belfast: Monday 8th September at NICVA - 61 Duncairn Gardens, Belfast BT15 2GB

Cookstown: Wednesday 10th September at the Glenavon Hotel - 52 Drum Rd, Cookstown BT80 8QS

L/Derry: Friday 12th September at the Everglades Hotel- Prehen Rd, Londonderry BT47 2NH

All events will run 10:30-12 noon approx. To register for the information session please contact us at the following email address - communitypartnership@vssni.org.

All organisations who are considering making an application are advised to attend the information sessions.

Written queries

VSS will accept written queries on the application process via email to the following address - communitypartnership@vssni.org

We will publish responses to all queries received on the VSS website. This will ensure that all applicants are kept informed and will provide clarity on frequently asked questions.

Excel workbook technical support

In addition, VSS staff will be available to provide **technical support** for queries on the completion of the Delivery Plan and Budget Workbook (excel). Support will be provided **only** with respect to excel technical queries. VSS staff cannot discuss or offer views on the proposed project approach/content ahead of the closing date.

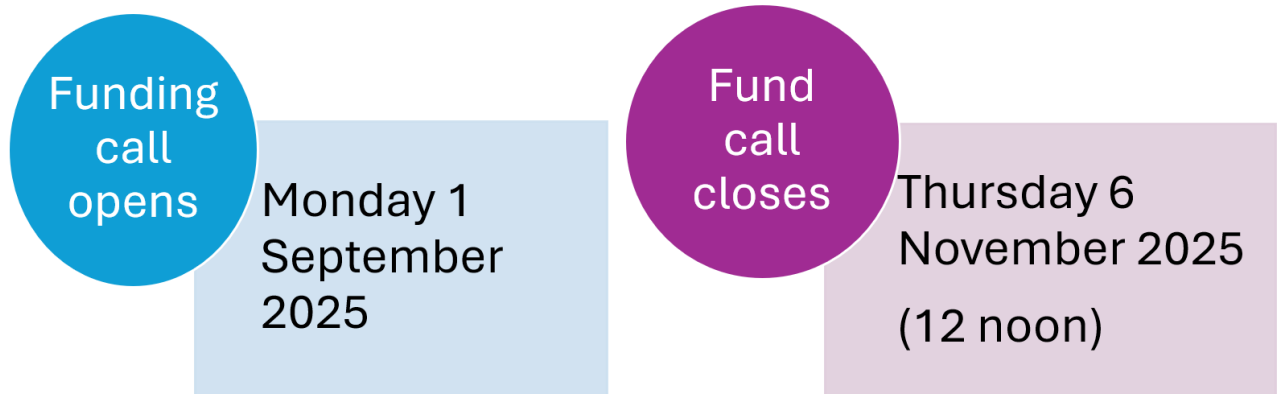
To book a technical support appointment, please contact us at the following email address - communitypartnership@vssni.org

Technical Support (on the excel workbook) will be available until **12 noon Tuesday 4th November 2025**.

Technical support on the excel workbook **cannot** be provided after this date.

VSS staff can provide support to applicants with the electronic submission of their application forms up to the closing date.

9. When will the call open and close?



10. Overview of the assessment process



Key information for applicants on the assessment process:

- Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria at Stage 1 **will not** proceed to Stage 2 for further assessment. It is anticipated that applicants will be informed of the outcome in November 2025.
- Applications that do not meet the minimum scoring threshold will be deemed unsuccessful. It is anticipated that applicants will be informed of the outcome in January 2026.
- Organisations whose applications are unsuccessful at stage 1 or stage 2 have the **right to appeal**. Please see section 12 for further information on appeals.
- As part of the project assessment, VSS staff will review each application to determine if it offers good value for money. During this stage:
 - The team **may contact your organisation** with follow-up questions.
 - These questions could be:
 - **written**, asking for more details or documents.
 - or involve an **in-person or online meeting**.

It's important that **key contacts** in your organisation are **available and responsive** during this time to avoid delays.

- It should be noted that **approval of a bid will not guarantee allocation of funding** in a situation where the value of approved bids on the merit list exceeds the available funding.

Key factors that VSS will consider as part of the assessment process:

- VSS will ensure that resources are allocated against identified and evidenced needs in a transparent, fair, and effective way.
- VSS will also ensure that interventions are equitably targeted as per the identified and evidenced needs and priorities. We will take account of geography, and accessibility for victims and survivors from across the community, combined with proposed approaches to meet the needs identified within each locality.
- Applicants should be aware that VSS reserves the right to fund only specific strands, parts or activity levels within proposals that are most appropriate for the priorities agreed and resources available. Under such circumstances, the

VSS will engage with organisations to explain and agree the approach/allocation.

- VSS Board retains **final discretion** on all allocations of funding.

11. Scoring process and resource allocation recommendations

The table below outlines the scoring process that will be applied in the assessment of each application. These scores will be used to create a **merit list** of small grant applications.

Each application will undergo a value for money assessment. This will be conducted by a multi-disciplinary assessment team at VSS. Where necessary, the team will engage with the applicant organisation to clarify or further explore the information provided. The aim of this assessment is to determine whether the proposed social support activities proposed - specifically the volume, range, and cost - is reasonable, acceptable and affordable.

The multi-disciplinary team will collaborate with the applicant to refine the proposal into a plan that is both deliverable and represents value for money.

Allocation of the Victims Support Programme's available funds for small grants will be made in line with the merit list. However, as outlined above, we will also take into account within allocation decisions the geographic distribution and the accessibility of services for victims and survivors across the community.

As a result, it may be necessary to amend delivery plans and associated budgets.

It should be noted that approval of a bid will not guarantee allocation of funding in a situation where the value of approved bids on the merit list exceeds the available funding.

Scoring Table

Application Section	Marks	Weighting	Max Available score
Section 1: Tell us about your organisation	0-10	(x1)	10
Section 2: Tell us about the social support (social connection) activities that you want to apply for	0-10	(x4)	40
Section 3: Tell us about funding you require for your project	0-10	(x2)	20
Section 4: Tell us how you how you project will be managed by your organisations volunteer management committee	0-10	(x1)	10
Section 5: Tell us how you will report outputs and outcomes to us	0-10	(x1)	10
Section 6: Tell us about how you will close your project	0-10	(x1)	10
Section 7: Tell us about your partnerships and/or referral processes	Not scored		
Section 8: Tell us about any other sources of income that you have	Not scored		
Total Marks available			100

Notes to scoring:

1. The minimum mark required for each question is 6/10.

12. Appeals

Unsuccessful applicants who wish to appeal the outcome of the assessment decision may do so. The appeals process is set out in [SMALL GRANTS Annex B: Appeal of Application Outcome Decisions](#).

Please note:

The appeals procedure allows applicants to appeal a decision on the either the eligibility assessment of their application or the scoring assessment of their application, specifically a decision that it does not meet the minimum threshold score of 6/10, meaning the application is unsuccessful. However, **it does not apply to decisions regarding the amount of funding allocated to successful applicants** — appeals concerning the level of funding awarded will not be considered.