

# Prosper Wakefield District Grant Making Policy 2026

- Effective from 06/2026
  - Next review date 01/2027
  - Document owner: Head of Grants
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## 1. Purpose of this Policy

We define a grant as a financial award that we make from Prosper Wakefield District's endowment funds to support charitable activities across the Wakefield District.

In this policy we will:

- Align Prosper's funding principles with our core purpose and Prosper values to achieve maximum impact
- Define the eligibility criteria for applicants (Reviewed April 2026, next review January 2027)
- Describe the application, assessment, decision-making, and monitoring processes.

This document has been developed to foster trust and accountability between Prosper board of trustees, staff team and applicants.

## 2. About Prosper Wakefield District

Prosper Wakefield District is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England & Wales No. 00489136. Charity number: 226121.

Benefiting communities in the Wakefield District. Prosper is governed by a board of trustees.

Our core purpose is: **Improving lives across Wakefield District through grants.**

We achieve this by supporting voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations to:

- Tackle poverty and inequality
- Improve health, wellbeing, and fulfilment.

For 2026 Prosper has a focus on the following areas. These areas will be reviewed annually (next review January 2027) assessing the need across the district:

- Children and young People
- Households on the Edge
- VCSE research capacity
- Community connectivity.

All grant-making decisions are checked against our Prosper Values:

- Fair
- Honest
- Inclusive
- Professional
- Brave
- Transparent

### 3. Grant-making governance

The Board of trustees has ultimate collective responsibility for all grant-making decisions in line with Prosper's strategic priorities:

- Trustees retain ultimate responsibility for all grant-making decisions, supported by the staff team and grant panels whose insights help inform recommendations
- The Board of Trustees and staff team will agree annual focus areas and grant programmes at the annual planning day, with decisions guided by previous grant programmes evaluation and local insight
- Trustees may delegate elements of decision-making to sub-committees, individual board members, or the staff team, in line with the agreed scheme of delegation
- Trustees reserve the right to apply specific conditions to any grant awarded
- Trustees also reserve the right to decline any recommendation where they (or those acting under delegated authority) determine that a grant would not be charitable in nature or would conflict with Prosper's strategic priorities.

### 4. Scope of Funding

In 2026 Prosper will distribute approximately £350,000 annually through a range of grant programmes, including Small Grants, Prosper Together Fund and other targeted specialist funding opportunities.

Prosper take time to understand any information gathered or shared from organisations, alongside trusted public research sources. Prosper use this insight to develop grant programmes and make fair funding decisions.

- Grants will typically range from £500 upwards. The largest single-year award to date is £41,000.
- Prosper may consider providing multi-year funding where impact and need are clear. For example:
  - Nova and Young Lives each received £25,000 per year over three years
  - Star Bereavement received £38,000 per year over three years.

Any specific support for specialist grants will be agreed in advance by the Prosper board of trustees. All recommendations are taken to the sub-committee and will receive final approval at the quarterly board meeting.

## 5. Eligibility Criteria

As of April 2026 organisations must meet the following eligibility criteria for all Prosper grants and will be checked by the Prosper staff team as part of due-diligence:

- Be a registered charity
  - We will accept applications from CIC's providing we can see that as much funding as possible is being reinvested in the organisation.
  - Locally constituted and managed branches of national or large charities will also be considered
- Be based in or delivering work within the Wakefield district
- Have at least three unrelated trustees, directors, or committee members
- Have a bank account in the organisation's name with at least two unrelated signatories.

The board of trustees reserve the right to review to eligibility criteria at any time. Any recommendations must be taken to a sub-committee and be given final approval by all board of trustees at the quarterly board meeting.

### **Additional considerations may include:**

- Annual income or turnover levels are based on each individual grant programme
- Reserves and financial sustainability
  - We look at reserves in context. Organisations hold funds for different reasons at different times. We want to see evidence of sound financial management, including good processes, transparency, governance and a clear explanation of reserves management
- Support for emerging groups that are not yet fully constituted
- Governance and trustee board composition
- Provision of supporting documentation, if requested, including financial information about levels of reserves, governing documents and policies, and share these with panel members where appropriate.

### **We do not fund:**

- Individuals
- For-profit organisations
- Statutory bodies (e.g. schools, hospitals)
- Sports clubs where there is no wider benefit to the community
- Organisations who are using the funding to promote any religion or political cause
- Overseas organisations or activities
- Organisations without appropriate governance, financial controls, or safeguarding (where relevant)

These may be re-considered on a programme by programme basis and be outlined at the annual Prosper planning day. All changes to any criteria must have full written approval the quarterly board meeting by the board of trustees.

## **6. Safeguarding**

Prosper takes safeguarding very seriously. Organisations we fund hold primary responsibility for safeguarding the people they support and work with.

The Charity Commission provides online information on safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees: [Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees – GOV.UK](#)

We expect their safeguarding measures to be proportionate to size of VCSE or charitable organisations

## **7. Type of funding**

When a VCSE meets all eligibility criteria and are fully aligned within the scope of our strategic priorities we can offer unrestricted funds to support any core or project costs.

We are open to capital funding, and this will be funded based on a case by case basis dependant on the level of cost required to complete the capital project.

## **8. Transparency and openness**

Prosper Wakefield District is committed to being an open, transparent, and accessible funder. We will:

- Publish clear and accessible criteria for each grant round
- Provide at least one online drop-in session and respond to enquiries from potential applicants
- Offer alternative means for organisations to apply for a Prosper grant
- Clearly communicate the application window, which will typically remain open for at least 12 weeks
- Not close grant rounds early prior to the advertised deadline
- Where relevant, publish grant outcomes openly
- Provide constructive feedback to all applicants
- We will seek opportunities to match fund and add influence, where possible
- We will seek to adhere to IVAR principles of being an open, trusting and transparent funder.

## 9. Use of AI in grant applications

We understand that AI can be used in a variety of ways, such as for research or as a writing tool.

We also know that AI and other software can help people to communicate their own thoughts and ideas, particularly for those for whom English is a secondary language or those who face barriers to making written applications.

However, we advise all applicants to be cautious when considering using AI to generate answers to questions in grant applications and reports.

What's important to us as a funder is that application and report questions are answered clearly and accurately, with an honest account of what each organisation will do or have done. We're not expecting perfect language, grammar, and style. We just need to be able to understand each answer.

As with any software, the use of generative AI is the responsibility of each individual organisation. Ultimately, the content included in each application or report and the proposed or delivered activity, must be owned by the applicant doing the work. As AI programmes and tools continue to be developed, we will continually review our AI stance and assessment processes, to ensure we're as fair and inclusive as possible.

## 10. The application process

Prosper operates a structured, fair, and transparent process managed by the Prosper staff team. Where relevant each grant programme will be clearly promoted via the Prosper website, email, local infrastructure channels, online, and throughout social media.

### Application form

Prosper endeavours to keep the application simple as possible, proportionate to the level of funding applied for. All applications should include:

- A completed eligibility criteria checklist
- Request for a brief organisation background
- Need for funding based on Prosper's grant programme priority areas
- Financial statements and budgets.

The staff team are available to answer any queries or offers of support at any time during the application window. Prosper will provide least one online drop-in session to respond to enquiries from potential applicants.

## **Due-diligence checks**

All due-diligence checks will be made in reference to eligibility criteria. These checks will be carried out by the Prosper staff team. All applicants will be contacted by telephone and/or email if there are any queries around due-diligence.

## **Application assessment**

- Applications are reviewed by an externally recruited grants panel.
- Prosper aims to ensure a diverse and knowledgeable panel, where relevant to each fund
  - At least one Prosper trustee
  - Individuals with lived experience relevant to the funding theme
  - Match funding partners
  - Local community or sector experts
  - A corporate / business representative
  - A representative from another funder

All application forms will be shared with the panel for pre-read scoring and comments to bring on the day of decision.

## **Funding decisions**

The panel will make decisions for funding organisations based on:

- Grant programme priority areas
- Prosper strategic priorities; work that tackles poverty and inequality and/or improving health and wellbeing
- A strong understanding of their community and its needs
- Meaningful engagement with local people possibly including lived experience
- Inclusive, accessible approaches especially for those most affected by poverty or inequality.

The Grants Panel makes final fund recommendations to Trustees, ensuring fairness, transparency, and alignment with Prosper's strategic priorities.

## **Applicant Feedback**

Prosper will always provide feedback to all applicants, including unsuccessful applicants, and signpost them to additional support where relevant.

## Grant agreement and disbursement

- Successful organisations enter into a Prosper grant agreement, outlining terms, monitoring, and payment schedules.
- Funds are disbursed once grant agreements are signed, dated and returned to Prosper Wakefield District.

## 11. Monitoring, evaluation, and learning

Prosper emphasises learning and improvement rather than burdensome reporting. We will:

- Request light-touch progress updates from funded organisations always proportionate to the grant
- Conduct annual impact reviews for multi-year grants
- Offer shared learning opportunities, such as workshops and networking events
- Encourage use of creative reporting formats (e.g. short videos or visual stories)
- Encourage the use of technology and digital innovation to evidence impact
- Where appropriate, connect funded organisations to our Community Journalists Programme to help share their impact stories, and create a compelling narrative.

## 11. Conclusion

Prosper Wakefield District is dedicated to an open, fair and transparent approach to grant making. If you have any queries or require any support please get in touch with Emma McKee, Head of Grants: [info@prosperwakefielddistrict.org](mailto:info@prosperwakefielddistrict.org)