



Frequently Asked Questions

Community Housing Fund
Revenue Programme 2021/22

Updated 25/08/21

Frequently Asked Questions

Question: We still have some milestone 3 tasks to complete. Is my scheme advanced enough to apply?

All applicants will be assessed to see if they can complete all the work required with the funding, by the end of March 2022, to enable their scheme to achieve milestone 5. You will need to provide a realistic project plan to demonstrate that your project will progress this far.

Schemes that have achieved milestone 3 or beyond will be prioritised for assessment. If you are at milestone 2 and still have tasks to complete for milestone 3 you can still apply, but your application will only be assessed if there is insufficient demand for funding from more advanced schemes.

Question: Is it ok that we are working towards submitting an application for outline planning permission rather than a full planning application?

If you are requesting funding to help submit an outline planning application, you will need to prove that the tasks you are requesting funding for include the detailed pre-development work that will enable you to go onto submit a reserved matters application without any need for securing further grant funding.

This programme is all about supporting groups to complete the work required to be able to achieve milestone 5, i.e. achieve full planning permission and 'get over the line'. Pre-development work funded by this programme has to be completed by the end of March 2022. Your project timeline would need to show that you will also be able to submit a reserved matters application as an outcome of this funding in Spring 2022.

Question: Can we apply for funding to appeal a planning decision?

A key requirement of this programme is to prove the deliverability of your housing scheme. One element of this is providing evidence of a clear path to achieving planning consent. If the planning application has been rejected it will be difficult for you to prove deliverability at this stage in your project. Once your appeal had been successful, then your scheme would be in better position to prove deliverability.

Question: Can our scheme be any mix of affordable tenures?

Yes, a mix of tenures of both affordable and market rate properties is ok and encouraged. Your scheme can also be a mixed-use scheme, although this programme will only pay for housing pre-development costs.

If schemes have mixed tenures, with affordable housing and market sale/rent, then these schemes can be supported with a proportion of pre-development costs met, based on the amount of affordable housing that is proposed in the scheme.

Question: What does affordable mean in this context? Would it support something like Mutual Home Ownership?

All types of affordable housing schemes will be eligible as long as the project is providing some housing that is affordable and remains so in perpetuity.

Projects with non-standard tenures, such as Mutual Home Ownership Schemes (MHOS), are eligible to apply if they can show how the capital funding will be secured. There is currently no capital funding available through the Community Housing Fund.

Subsidy Questions:

Question: What types of support should be included in the de-minimis calculation? We are receiving an asset transfer of land from the Local Authority at nil cost. Should the value of the land be included in the amount of support we are receiving within a 3-year period?

We recommend that applicants should seek and rely on their own legal advice regarding subsidy control compliance matters. It will be your responsibility to ensure that any grant awarded will be lawful.

There is currently a minimal financial assistance threshold (previously known as a de minimis exemption) of circa £350,000 calculated over a three-year rolling basis. It applies to all public grants received over a 3-year fiscal period, whether from this fund or from other public funds for different projects.

It is our understanding at this time that it also includes public loans at preferential rates and discounted public land/buildings. We recommend that any discount in the sale price of land/buildings from a public body should be included in your calculation of how much support you have received every 3 fiscal years.

It is our understanding that capital grants from central or local government for affordable housing projects (such as from the Affordable Homes Programme) do not need to be included in this calculation.

The minimal financial assistance threshold calculation is based on 325,000 Special Drawing Rights (SDR) given to a single beneficiary over three years. Special Drawing Rights are an IMF unit and 325,000 SDR is currently approximately £332,000. Any forms of support below this amount are out of scope of the TCA's obligation to apply the principles of a subsidy.

Question: We received a grant from Homes England last March, when the limit was Euro500k per every 3 years/ per organisation, under EU rules. Can we count that funding as in the 'past' and just include land values and the new grant we will be bidding for in our next 3 year cycle?

Any government support considered to be State aid over the last 3 years would be included in the minimal financial assistance threshold calculation. There has not been a cut-off point between one sets of EU rules and the new UK government subsidy rules. The circa £350,000 limit is being calculated on a rolling 3 fiscal year basis and so any government support provided whilst under EU State aid rules deemed to be State aid within the last 3 years should be included.

Question: Is state aid/subsidy rules applicable per project or per organisation?

The new minimal financial assistance threshold is a circa £350k limit per rolling 3-year period per group, not per project.

Valuations

Question: We have done a valuation report of the land and properties in question in 2019. Would that be accepted, or do we have to re-evaluate?

We recommend that you look at the valuation report to see how long the valuation is valid for. Validity periods may vary according to changes in RICS guidance and individual practices. The report will usually say “this report is valid for a period of xxx months from the date of this report”.

If a valuation is out of date, we recommend that you upload the valuation report that you have to your application form and submit your application. We recommend also going back to the valuer as soon as you can to seek an email to confirm the original report is still valid or request a re-valuation. This information can then be submitted to the grant assessor at a later stage.

The Homes England capital fund guidance on valuation advice states that your valuation report for the site/property acquired must be valid at the date of exchange of purchase contracts. If you are planning to apply for a Homes England capital grant you will need an up to date valuation report. This includes acquisition events of any kind (even for an acquisition at nil value).

Support to apply

To discuss particular scheme proposals and whether the Programme is suitable, applicants are invited to contact their local Enabler Hub for advice. Details of your local Enabler Hub can be found here communityledhomes.org.uk/find-your-local-hub.

If applicants have specific questions about the application process or application form that can't be answered by the nearest Enabler Hub, please contact grants@communityledhomes.org.uk.

We recommend that you seek advice from a community led housing advisor before applying to the Programme. An experienced advisor will be able to help you to consider the costs you are likely to incur and help you put together a budget.



Community Led Homes

Community led housing is a way that people and communities can come together to solve their own housing challenges and provide high quality and affordable homes. The homes are managed or owned by the community in the way they want.

Community Led Homes is run by four leading community-led housing organisations: Confederation of Co-operative Housing, Locality, National Community Land Trust Network and UK Cohousing.

We have come together to make it easier for communities to access support and build a lasting movement.

**Register to hear all the news about events,
training and funding.**

communityledhomes.org.uk



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