

Age Scotland & Scottish Government Fund Encouraging and Supporting Grassroots Activity (ESGA)

Guidance for applicants

Funding for groups delivering community-based support for people living with dementia and unpaid carers.



Apply for grants between **£3,000 and £15,000**

Deadline for applications: **5pm on Friday 11th September 2026**

Download application form at www.age.scot/ESGA

Email address for submitting applications:
DementiaGrants@agescotland.org.uk

What is this fund?

The aim of the ESGA fund is to build resilience and sustainability in **community-based support for people living with dementia and unpaid carers of people with dementia**. This programme will fund activities that help people with lived experience of dementia to be more connected to and supported by their communities, and to improve their overall health and wellbeing.

This is a limited fund with **£310,000** of funding available and is only open to applicants in Scotland. Groups can apply for funding awards between **£3,000 and £15,000** for a period of 12 months between **1st April 2027 and 31st March 2028**. Applicants can submit an individual bid, or a collaborative bid in partnership with other groups.

The ESGA programme is delivered by Age Scotland's Dementia team and funded by the Scottish Government through their Resilient Communities Programme Board. This fund supports the delivery of the [National Dementia Strategy for Scotland: Everyone's Story](#).

This programme has been developed in partnership with a lived experience panel of people living with dementia and unpaid carers. Our panel have a central role in deciding which applications receive funding, ensuring that the voices of lived experience are meaningfully involved in how funding is distributed.

When we refer to people with lived experience of dementia throughout this guidance, this includes:

- **People living with dementia (with or without a formal diagnosis)**
- **Unpaid carers, care partners, informal caregivers, and family members of people living with dementia**

Please use similar terminology when writing your application. Our panel ask that you avoid using the term 'suffering with dementia'.

Who can apply to this fund?

This fund is for **grassroots community groups or organisations** working with people living with dementia and/or unpaid carers of people with dementia in Scotland. By **grassroots**, we mean that you must work with people with lived experience of dementia at a local level to deliver community-based activities or support. Your work must meaningfully involve the voices of lived experience and be community-led in its approach.

You can apply to this fund if you are based in Scotland and are any of the following:

- A constituted community group or voluntary/community organisation
- A registered charity
- A community interest company (CIC)
- A charitable incorporated organisation (CIO)

You must meet all the following criteria to be eligible for this fund:

- Your organisation has a bank account with at least two signatories
- You are applying to fund work that will benefit people living with dementia and/or unpaid carers of people with dementia at a local level
- You are meaningfully involving members of your community in your application
- You can run your funded activities between **1st April 2027 and 31st March 2028**

We will **not** accept applications from:

- National organisations
- Organisations or community groups not based in Scotland

We do not have an income limit, however we will prioritise community groups and organisations with smaller annual incomes.

Can I apply if I have previously been awarded funding from Age Scotland?

Groups who have received previous dementia funding from Age Scotland **are eligible** to apply. You must demonstrate the impact of your previous funding and explain how this funding would support your group to develop this work.

As this is a limited fund, priority may be given to projects who have not received funding from Age Scotland before.

What will we fund?

You can apply for a grant between **£3,000 and £15,000** to fund work that benefits people living with dementia and/or unpaid carers in your community.

This includes but is not limited to:

- Enabling people with lived experience to access peer support, stay active, and be involved in their interests
- Creating opportunities for support, connections, and respite for unpaid carers of people living with dementia
- Working intergenerationally to increase awareness and inclusivity in the community

Your application must also explain how this funding will contribute to your group's future plans and sustainability. For example:

- Strengthening partnerships with other groups and organisations
- Increasing inclusivity and meaningful participation from people with lived experience in your activities
- Enabling you to pilot a new area of work or to strategically develop existing work

We welcome applications from communities across Scotland. We particularly encourage applications from:

- Groups working with rural and remote communities
- Groups working with ethnic minority communities
- Groups working in areas with high levels of multiple deprivation as measured by the SIMD
- Groups supporting people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010

Applications working with these communities may be given priority points during assessment where the need for dementia support is evidenced.

What costs are eligible?

We can cover various costs involved in running your activity, such as:

- Staffing and training costs
- Volunteer expenses
- Venue and transport costs
- Catering and activity costs

Capital costs will also be considered if clearly linked to community benefits within the 12-month funding period and long-term sustainability of the group.

If applying for project funding, you should consider what core costs you may need to include to be able to deliver the work over the full year, like staff management, admin, and overheads.

How will applications be assessed?

Your application will be assessed by the Age Scotland Dementia team alongside a panel of people living with dementia and unpaid carers. Final decisions are overseen by the Scottish Government's Resilient Communities Programme Board.

You will be assessed on how well you demonstrate the following criteria:

- The need and desire within the community for your activity
- How your activity will benefit people with lived experience of dementia within the 12-month funded period
- How people with lived experience of dementia will be involved in the development and delivery of your activity
- How this funding will contribute to the development and resilience of your work

As this is a limited fund, we will also be assessing value for money and how the costs in your budget are connected to the outcomes of your work.

When will applicants be informed of decisions?

As we anticipate a very high demand for this programme, we will be assessing applications over two stages.

Our first stage assessments will take place in September and October. We will notify you whether your application has been shortlisted for the second stage of assessments by the **end of November 2026**.

Our second stage assessments will take place in November and December. We will be aiming to notify all applicants of final decisions by **end of January 2027**.

Our timeframe for decision-making ensures that we can assess applications with full and meaningful input from our lived experience panel. We appreciate that applicants will want to be informed of decisions as soon as possible, so please be assured we will notify you of the outcome of your application at the earliest possible opportunity.

Award payments will be made in full to successful applicants by **end of March 2027**.

Information sessions

We will be holding an online information session via Zoom to talk through the details of this fund. You can also use this session to ask questions and get advice from members of our lived experience panel. This session will be held on:

- **Wednesday 19th August 10:30am – 11:30am**

If you would like to attend this information sessions, please email DementiaGrants@agescotland.org.uk to be sent the Zoom link

We encourage all applicants to get in touch with us in advance of applying to discuss your ideas. We are happy to arrange a call to chat through your application at any point while the fund is open.

Our contact details

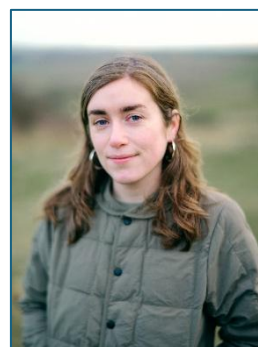
For support with your application, you can contact us by email at DementiaGrants@agescotland.org.uk

You can contact members of our team by phone on the numbers below.



Zita Surjan
Grants Officer

Tel. 0131 668 0338



Rona Forbes
Grants Officer

Tel. 0131 287 5243

How to submit your application

To apply for funding, please fill out the separate application form. You will need to download this from the Age Scotland website at <http://www.age.scot/ESGA>

Once completed, please submit your application as attachment via email to our Dementia Grants email address: DementiaGrants@agescotland.org.uk

All applications must be received by the deadline of **5:00pm on Friday 11th September 2026** to be considered for funding.

Apply via online video call

If you would prefer not to apply via written application, please get in touch to discuss applying through a recorded online video call. We are happy to offer this if it is the most accessible option for you and your group. Please get in touch with us as far in advance of the deadline as possible if you would like to do this.

An FAQ document with more information about how video applications work can be found at <http://www.age.scot/ESGA>