

Democracy Fund 2024/25

Information sheet

www.southwark.gov.uk/democracyfund



The Democracy Fund is part of the Empowering Communities Programme and is designed to provide funding for local people, groups or networks, so they can arrange their own meetings and events. These can be for specific issues or to allow local people to get together and become active in their communities. You don't have to meet face to face to qualify for funding, your meetings can be held online.

For example, funding can be provided to discuss a lack of facilities/activities for local people, anti-social behaviour, or discussions on creating a community project/network. It can also support existing borough-wide networks such as women's groups, LGBTQ+, youth groups to widen their reach into their communities of interest.

The funding could also be available for community groups to run digital training sessions, which will allow their members to become active in online council or external meetings, events or consultations.

The fund is designed to support public discussion and will cover any of the following expenditure:

- Venue hire (subject to coronavirus restrictions)
- Publicity and invitations
- Zoom License, Survey Monkey fees, etc
- Equipment hire such as laptops, cameras, conference PA system
- Professional speakers' fees
- Digital training fees
- Refreshments, etc.

How much is available?

The total pot available for the Democracy Fund is £20,000 per year to be shared between multiple groups across the borough. Groups can apply for grants of up to £1,000, but larger amounts can be awarded in exceptional circumstances.

Applications are open now and groups will be able to apply throughout the year, until 31 March 2025. This will be on a rolling basis and decisions will be taken within 4 to 5 weeks on receipt of submitted applications.

What is the Democracy Fund criteria:

- Applications from Southwark residents / Southwark based organisations
- It must be relevant to local or borough wide issues
- Meetings should be managed in a way that encourages respect and understanding
- Applications that are focused on youth participation in local democracy are welcome, ie. Meetings/workshops or conferences
- Register of attendees and equalities monitoring / photographic evidence.
- The event must be held in an accessible venue that complies with all relevant legislation and council policy.

What kind of things will not be funded?

- Loans or interest payments
- Political groups or activities promoting political beliefs
- Activities that promote religious beliefs
- Activities which have already happened or started before the grant decision dates
- Activities that do not benefit people living in the local area
- Long term projects
- Festivals
- Activities or events that could be delivered by other funding programmes (Neighbourhoods Fund, etc.)
- Salaries

Who can apply?

- Any individual/group(s) who live and work in Southwark
- Groups that are working together on a shared issue or topic.

Who cannot apply?

- Organisations not established in the UK
- Organisations that do not have any local links and/ or do not have a track record of working locally
- Political groups and organisations
- Where activities could result in personal gain

How are decisions made?

Decisions for applications will be recommended by a panel of Community Champions (councillors). Successful groups will be notified.

Successful applicants will be asked to sign and return a condition of fund agreement, before funding can be released. All necessary documentation must be submitted with the application for it to be considered.

After completion of the meeting/event/workshops, monitoring and evaluation must be submitted.

Funding will not be released to individual applicants who are successful. Individual applicants can only receive funding through a constituted group.

How to apply?

You can apply online at www.southwark.gov.uk/democracyfund

For enquiries

Email democracyfund@southwark.gov.uk