SCG01: SEMLEP Community Grants Guidance for Applicants

1. Introduction

Community Grants is part funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and managed by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). The programme enables voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations, (that would not otherwise be able), to access funding through the ESF, to support people who are currently unemployed or economically inactive to take up training, or progress to paid employment (at least 1hour per week).

Projects funded through the Community Grants programme must not duplicate projects that are already funded through the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) or Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) main provision, or ESF co-financing.

The application process will open on 10th January 2022 and will close on 2nd February 2022 at 12.00 pm. To apply for the funding, firstly you must check eligibility on the SEMLEP website https://www.semlep.com/community-grants/. If eligible, you will then need to complete the register of interest form. Please ensure that your application has been submitted by 12.00 pm on 2nd February 2022 as the system closes and your application will be not completed.

If you are making multiple applications you will need to submit multiple expressions of interest.

To make your application, click on the link below and go to the eligibility tab and fill in an expression of interest.

Community Grants (semlep.com)

Please note that where the documents that have been requested on the form are not submitted your application will fail at the due diligence stage. Please ensure that you read the questions carefully and submit the required documents.

All applications must be submitted through the portal. No applications will be accepted via email unless agreed with the Community Grants Team.

Should you have any questions, please contact the Community Grants team at SEMLEP by emailing communitygrants@semlep.com.

2. Grants Available

The purpose of Community Grants is to help voluntary and community groups to make a difference in local communities in the South East Midlands.

Organisations are invited to apply for grants between £10,000 to £20,000. The grants will support a range of activities aimed at supporting unemployed and economically inactive people to move closer to the labour market by improving their skills and removing barriers to work in the South East Midlands. Projects can be between 6 and 12 months in length.

The grants are not intended to provide mainstream training activity, but rather to provide community-level support so that the hardest to reach communities can move closer to mainstream activity.

The grant programme is keen to receive applications from organisations that can create bespoke ways to engage with people from the hardest to reach communities. We are particularly looking for projects that can deliver online learning or projects that can be delivered in line with COVID-19 guidelines – focusing, targeting unemployed people and those who have recently been made redundant, particularly those that are 50+

The grant requires 17% of your participants to progress to paid employment and 14% to progress to education, this information is to be provided by Grant Applicants on section 10 of the application form.

3. Eligibility

3.1 Project Criteria

Funding must be used towards the costs of the overall project that you have outlined in your application. You are allowed to buy in specialist tutor hours. Sub-contracting the whole project with other organisations is **not** permitted.

The Grant applicant MUST:

- Be able to cover the running costs of the project prior to reimbursement.
- Give consent to be involved in publicity of the overall Programme where required.
- Agree to take part in any monitoring and produce relevant information/documentation as requested throughout the process.
- Have a UK bank account.
- Have a constitution of rules saying how the organisation is managed and what it does.
- Be able to demonstrate complete autonomy from any organisation that has in excess of £300,000 annual income or 50 or more full time equivalent employees. If the organisation belongs to a parent/umbrella group, then the parent / umbrella group's Statement of Financial Activity (SOFA) figure must be used in assessing group income/turnover, and this must be under the limit of £300,000
- The organisation applying must also have less than £300K turnover
- Organisations must have less than 50 full time equivalent employees to be eligible. Applicants are to enter the staff headcount in the Application as Annual Work Units. Part Time and Seasonal Workers are to count as a fraction. Please use the link for further guidance: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/conferences/state-aid/sme/smedefinitionguide_en.pdf.
- Have financial accounts that show how the organisation spends its money every year, and systems recording income and expenditure.
- Have a named individual who will be responsible for the grant - we require a name, address, telephone number and an email address.

Please be aware that progression into volunteering is not an output under this Community Grants project.

It is vital that successful organisations can implement and manage their projects. This may seem like an obvious point, but it remains an important one: on making a successful bid, your organisation will be invited to enter into a contract to deliver the agreed proposal. Your organisation should therefore have fully thought through the proposal and made preliminary plans for its implementation. **This includes having sufficient resources to complete the participant paperwork that is required. There are a large number of forms to complete and you must allocate someone to administer this as you will not be paid until these are signed off by a project officer.**

We welcome applications from organisations that meet our eligibility criteria, which can be found on the SEMLEP website, www.semlep.com/community-grants/, or within the section below.

Project activities could include support with:

- **Removal of barriers:** this could include consultation, first engagement activities, mentoring and promoting progression into education or paid employment to target groups. The staff that are delivering this project should be qualified to carry out these activities.

- **Accredited learning:** the project leads to a certificate at the end of the activity.

- **Non-accredited:** A project offering taster work experience including voluntary work, sessional training on bespoke/one-off courses, or initial help with basic skills.

- **Core Competencies (Soft Skills/Transferable Skills):** These skills are personal attributes that enhance an individual's interactions, job performance and career prospects. These are skills which do not lead to qualifications, but are vital for employment success, such as confidence building, communication, presentation and basic digital skills.

The project application must:

- Describe exactly what the grant will be used for.
- Describe what you want to do with the grant. Importantly, how is it new or in addition or different to what your organisation normally does?
- Describe how you will evidence whether your project has been a success or not.
- Commit to showing the ESF logo on all paperwork involved with your project. The required logo's will be provided upon signature of contract and will need to be displayed at delivery locations.

3.2 Business Criteria

Legal Structure, policies and safeguarding

To be eligible for this funding, you will need to submit a legal structure that demonstrates you are a VCSE organisation as set out in your constitution or memorandum and articles of association that clearly outlines the aims and rules governing the organisation. **If this documentation is not submitted your application will automatically be declined.**

We can accept applications from:

- voluntary or community organisations
- registered charities
- constituted groups or clubs
- not-for-profit companies or Community Interest Companies

We cannot accept applications from:

- individuals
- sole traders
- companies limited by shares
- organisations with fewer than two unrelated members on their board or committee

- organisations outside the UK
- one organisation applying on behalf of another.

Projects funded through SEMLEP's Community Grants programme should be able to demonstrate how they monitor equality and diversity, as well as sustainability management. This includes showing how you would take appropriate action to reduce or mitigate the environmental impact of projects.

Equal opportunities Policy and Implementation Plan

You will be required to submit a copy of your policy and implementation plant. You must ensure the policy has a clear general statement which recognises the importance of the Equality Act 2010 and the related Public Sector Equality Duty. The policy also must commit the organisation to have due regard to the three aims of the general equality duty:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

It should also cover the nine protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010: Age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation. Plus due regard for marriage or civil partnership status.

You should also include or have a separate policy for anti-harrassment/anti-bullying.

Your monitoring plan must describe how you will monitor you effectiveness in this area, particular with regard to gender, race, disability and age.

Sustainability Policy and Implementation Plan

You must have a sustainability Policy and Implementation plan that includes confirmation that you will dispose of wasted using a registered wasted collector and you will observe and comply with the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) regulations and in particular to ensure the WEEE is not mixed with general wasted and is disposed of legally.

Your implementation plan will need to explain what steps you are taking to minimise waste, energy consumption and travel and promote the use of public or green transport where travel is unavoidable.

Employment

Organisations applying for the funding will need to comply with all employment UK law including legislation on stakeholder pensions (if appropriate) and demonstrate good practice in personnel matters by having clear policies and procedures.

Insurance

Organisations will need to ensure that appropriate insurance certification and licences are in place. This may include public liability, professional indemnity (where appropriate) and employer's liability. The level of cover would need to be: £1Million employers liability; £1Million professional indemnity and £1Million public liability.

Confidentiality

All organisations are expected to comply with the Data Protection Act 2018; where personal records are kept, personal services, advice and counselling are being provided, organisations will be expected to have a written policy of confidentiality.

If you are working with children, young people or vulnerable adults please ensure you have enclosed a copy of your organisation's confidentiality policy.

Health & safety

Organisations which receive grant funding must meet legal requirements under current Health and Safety regulations, in particular statutory obligations covering employees, volunteers and members of the public and buildings. This may include carrying out risk assessments and having fire certificates where appropriate.

Safeguarding Vulnerable adults and modern slavery

Organisations applying for the funding are to be aware of their responsibilities towards vulnerable adults within their service provision and to have a policy and guidelines for the protection of vulnerable adults.

3.3 Financial Management

The organisation will need to have in place procedures that enable their trustees to undertake their legal obligation.

a) Accounts

All applicants must prepare and maintain accounting records as required by the appropriate regulating body.

Additional documents to enclose with your application:

- A copy of your most recent approved accounts (for the last two years where these are available). Where accounts for the latest financial year have not yet been signed off we will accept these in draft form.
- A statement of your turnover, profit & loss account and management accounts (if applicable) for the most recent year of trading.
- A copy of your balance sheet for the current year (if applicable).
- Alternative means of demonstrating financial status if trading for less than a year
- Provide a recent (i.e. no older than 2 months at date of submission) bank statement

If this documentation (where applicable) is not submitted your application will automatically be declined.

3.4 Budget Expenditure Eligibility

The grant is not retrospective and therefore cannot be used for the reimbursement of goods/services already purchased before the date of the grant offer letter.

3.5 Eligible costs for ESF funding:

- Staff costs (where not already funded through other sources)
- Running costs of the project (e.g. room hire, marketing and publicity costs etc.)
- Skills training and other specialist course costs
- Administration costs directly associated with the project.
- Please note you need to ensure you have allowed time to complete the reporting (claim and monitoring requirements) of the programme. It is important that you have included "**Reasonable**" administration costs within your budget to cover this and the closure of the project.
- Project capital purchases, these are limited to £500 per item.

3.6 Ineligible costs for ESF funding:

- Any expenditure before the agreed project start date (signed grant agreement date)
- Core costs of running your organisation other than those directly associated with delivery of the project
- Any costs not directly associated with the running of this project
- Any costs that have been incurred (invoiced or payment made from your bank account) before the start date on your contract if your application is successful – i.e. we are unable to support costs you have already incurred
- Any costs incurred after the end date shown on your grant agreement
- Any costs that cannot be fully evidenced back to your organisation's nominated project bank account or that do not meet the evidence requirements, e.g. invoices not made out to your organisation or cash payments not previously agreed
- Any bank charges or legal fees
- Items which only benefit individuals; for example, bursaries, prizes or individual kit and equipment that is not shared.
- Activities promoting religious beliefs or political activities
- Activities that the State has a legal obligation to provide e.g. education
- Fundraising activities for your organisation or any other group or activity
- Contingency costs

Successful candidates will be required to ensure that ESF funded services will clearly add value and not duplicate any delivery that can be arranged locally through existing mainstream institutions.

3.7 Direct Costs

These are costs that can be directly related to the project activity e.g. salaries of project staff

3.8 Indirect Costs

Indirect costs are shared organisational costs and so cannot be connected directly to project activity and are therefore difficult to attribute to the project e.g. rent, telephone costs, gas, electricity and water.

Indirect costs can be claimed on a flat rate basis provided:

- They can be proven to be fair and equitable (a greater proportion of the costs should not be charged to the project as opposed to your organisation)
- The estimates used to calculate the flat rate percentage are based on actual costs and backed up by a full audit trail
- Indirect costs account for no more than 20% of the direct staffing costs.

4. SEMLEP Priorities

England's 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation [IMD] compares smaller subsections of the local authorities in SEMLEP on a relative basis to other parts of England. The study measures life quality in seven categories and ranks areas across the UK in 1500 person groupings (Lower-layer Super Output Areas or LSOAs) against one another.

While the economy across the UK has improved in the three-year cycle studied, through the IMD it is possible to understand if areas in SEMLEP are benefiting from this economic cycle as much as other areas on a comparative basis. The table below identifies local authority performance across all seven indices by local authority, with highlighting in areas that have more than one-fifth of their LSOAs in the bottom quintile of national ranks. Barriers to housing and services appears to be an issue to some degree in some areas. Education, skills and training deprivation is particularly high in Luton and North Northamptonshire, and thus these areas may require a tailored approach.

Priority will be given to provisions that focus on participants who reside in multiple deprivation areas, where services align and complement statutory providers such as the Police Crime Commission and the Health and Social Care [NHS] sector.

Applications are encouraged that support these target groups:

- People aged 50 or over
- People with disabilities, health conditions or neurodivergent traits
- Households with a single income and with dependent children
- Individuals who are homeless or in temporary accommodation
- People from ethnic minority groups
- Ex-Offenders [not receiving HMPPS support]
- Women returning to work e.g. returning from maternity leave, a long period as a carer or parent or those whose circumstances have changed

Please note that for this Community Grants Programme we are still operating under the old breakdown of districts in Northamptonshire and no activity should take place in Wellingborough and East Northamptonshire as they are not covered under the contract that SEMLEP has with the ESFA.

For more information please refer to:

SEMLEP's ESIF strategy
https://www.semlep.com/modules/downloads/download.php?file_name=195

SEMLEP Skills Strategy
https://www.semlep.com/south-east-midlands-skills-strategy/

SEMLEP
South East Midlands
Local Enterprise Partnership

Education & Skills
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SEMLEP PRIORITIES _ IMD AREA

SEMLEP area	IMD	Income	Employment	Education, Skills and Training	Health and Disability	Crime	Access to housing and services	Living Environment
Aylesbury Vale	1%	1%	2%	13%	1%	3%	24%	8%
Bedford	14%	17%	18%	19%	12%	11%	28%	17%
Central Bedfordshire	2%	5%	3%	10%	1%	12%	13%	3%
Cherwell	6%	4%	5%	20%	5%	8%	24%	17%
Corby	29%	17%	27%	59%	54%	20%	22%	0%
Daventry	2%	2%	5%	14%	5%	9%	27%	7%
Kettering	11%	12%	11%	16%	14%	19%	11%	9%
Luton	27%	28%	17%	23%	21%	26%	43%	15%
Milton Keynes	12%	11%	11%	14%	7%	9%	51%	2%
Northampton	23%	17%	16%	29%	27%	42%	20%	14%
South Northamptonshire	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	16%	12%

The data above is from 2019. Highlighted areas demonstrate the priority indicators
Percentage of each local authority's LSOAs ranking in the UK's worst 20% by deprivation category

We are particularly looking for projects that can deliver online learning or projects that can be delivered in line with COVID-19 guidelines – targeting unemployed people and those who have recently been made redundant, particularly those that are 50+.

5. How to Apply

Firstly, check your organisation's eligibility. If eligible, complete the register of interest form on the

SEMLEP website www.semlep.com/community-grants/

You will receive an acknowledgement email. Once your Expression of Interest has been received, a member from our delivery partner (Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire) will be in touch within 3 working days to follow up the enquiry.

Our delivery partner has lots of experience in ESF funded projects and can provide you with support during the pre- application stage.

You are welcome to use the word version of the form to complete a draft application form to send to our partner, they will let you know if there are any areas of the application that would be helped if you could provide further clarification. **Please note that you must submit your application via our portal. We cannot accept applications via email..**

We strongly recommend that you submit a draft application to our delivery partner, as they are there to help you understand if your organisation and project are eligible to receive ESFA funds, our application process and they will undertake due diligence once you have submitted your full application through our portal.

In case you prefer not to receive this free support, please make our partner aware as they will provide you access to our portal where you will be able to complete our online application and submit to SEMLEP.

If you want feedback on your application, it must be received by the delivery partner 3 days before the close of the round.

Please note that you will be required to complete all 13 sections of the application form and provide the required supporting documents, otherwise your application will be declined.

Key dates related to the calls are available on our website.

6. Selection and Award Criteria

Grant applications will be assessed in accordance with the following selection criteria which assesses the ability of the applicant to perform a contract based on the information provided in the application form.

Stage One - Application form Sections 1 to 6

Stage 1 of the application form is PASS / FAIL. If you fail, the application will be rejected. Please ensure that you submit all the documents required.

Stage Two - Application form Sections 7 onwards

If the application passes stage one, it will then be assessed by the Officer Scoring Panel. The answers given by the grant applicant on sections 7 to 12 will be scored as stated on the next page. Further clarification may be sought at this stage.

Stage Three – Overall Application

If the application passes stages one and two, it will then be assessed by the Grant Panel.

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South East Midlands
Local Enterprise Partnership

Education & Skills
Funding Agency

European Union
European
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Each section has a specific weighting criterion, as detailed below.

Score Criteria	
Score 0-3	The answer has not met the criteria.
Score 4-7	The answer partially meets the criteria.
Score 8-10	The answer fully meets the grant criteria.

Section	Criteria	Score e.g.	Weighting (%)	Weighted Score
7	Describe the proposed project	9	30%	2.7
8	How will the project meet SEMLEP priorities?	9	10%	0.9
9	How will the project help participants access or move into paid employment and education?	8	30%	2.4
10A	Using your participant profile from section 6, provide an indication on the number of participants that will complete the learning assessment. From those participants, how many do you anticipate will progress into education or paid employment.			
10B	Considering the start date of the project and the deliverables provided, please explain your project participant journey detailing the rational applied to your indication of when and how it is likely that participants will be able to progress into paid employment and/or education?	7	10%	0.7
10C	How do you intend to recruit and retain participants during your project?			
11	What soft outcomes do you expect participants to gain through the project and how will you measure them? Please describe the participant journey as part of your response	9	10%	0.9
12	Who will be delivering the project? What are their qualifications/experience?	9	10%	0.9
	Total	51	100%	8.5

Award Criteria

Red Amber Green Methodology

SEMLEP will apply the RAG methodology on the total weighted score which is defined as the following.

Red	Score 0 - 5.9	The grant application has not met the minimum score threshold
Amber	Score 6 - 7.9	The grant application has exceeded the minimum score threshold and reasonably meets the funders' requirement
Green	Score 8.0 - 10	The grant application fully meets the grant criteria

Applications which fully meet the grant criteria

If we receive a high volume of applications for a round, some eligible applications, even if they are a good fit with our funding priorities and outcomes, may not receive funding from us, or may receive less than they have applied for.

It should be noted that whilst an application may fully meet the grant criteria, scoring 8.0 and above, we may ask applicants to provide further information or to meet certain conditions before the contract can be awarded.

The Project Manager will work with the applicants to help them meet these conditions. If for any reason the applicant cannot meet them, the contract will not be awarded. The applicant may reapply in future rounds.

The Grant Panel will review both the amount of capital expenditure and the amount of administration/project management time in relation to the value of the project. Applicants may be asked to revise this within the budget if they are disproportionate to the value of the project and the outcomes.

In all cases the Grant Panel's decision is final.

Applications which have exceeded the minimum score threshold and reasonably meet the funder's requirements

Please note that if a high volume of applications have been received, for a round, which fully meet the grant criteria then we may not be able to consider those applications which have scored less than 8.0; these applicants will not receive funding from us in this round and may reapply in future rounds..

Where there is funding still available after the applications which fully meet the criteria have been awarded then all applications that score between 6.0 and 7.9 will be reviewed at the Grant Panel on a case by case basis.

Where an application is a risk to SEMLEP or there is insufficient information for a clear decision to be made the application will be rejected. Constructive feedback will be given to the applicant and they may reapply in a future round.

If the applicant needs to provide further information, and this is nominal, the Project Manager may use their devolved powers to award the grant.

If the Grant Panel feels a grant can only be awarded where certain conditions are met, including the provision of further information, they will agree the feedback and criteria to be sent to the applicant.

The Grant Panel will review both the amount of capital expenditure and the amount of administration/project management time in relation to the value of the project. Applicants may be asked

to revise this within their budget, as part of the conditions to be met, if these are disproportionate to the value of the project and the outcomes.

The Project Manager will work with the applicants to help them meet these conditions. If for any reason the applicant cannot meet them the contract will not be awarded. The applicant may reapply in future rounds.

The Grant Panel may decide that where a high volume of eligible grants have been received then where the above conditions have been met the grant awarded may be for less money than the applicant has applied for.

In all cases the Grant Panel's decision is final.

Applications which have not met the minimum score threshold

Should an application fail, the Grant Panel will provide constructive feedback to the applicant. The Grant Panel's decision is final.

Further information

Applicants should note that your project cannot start until SEMLEP have issued and received a signed copy of the contract.
The project start date stated in your application will be the start date on your contract, subject to SEMLEP receiving the signed copy.

7.   Payment of the grant

Payment of the grant will be made as follow:

25% of the grant will be paid at the start of delivery, within 10 working days after SEMLEP has received a copy of the signed contract and invoice.

The remaining 75% of the grant will be paid, subject to the following conditions:

- the organisation having satisfactorily completed SEMLEP's claim form.
- the organisation providing all relevant documentation related to the claim, this will include evidence to support project spend to-date, as well as information that shows that the key objectives are being met, e.g. performance/ other appropriate documentation asked to provide on monthly and a quarterly basis.
- Payments are also subject to having complied with the terms and conditions of the contract.

The remaining 75% will be paid as follow:

You must submit a claim for the grant assistance quarterly.

Please note that the second payment will be paid subject to the provision of satisfactory evidence for your profiled activity and must include an initial assessment and individual learner plan, you will also need to ensure there are measurements in place to record the distance individuals travel against the Individual Learner Plan.

Any ineligible items of expenditure will be subtracted from the grant payment.

Please be aware that failure to provide the monthly monitoring information may result in a delay in approving the release of your next payment.

Your final grant payment will not be issued until all evidence, reports, and participant documentation have been reviewed and validated.

If the actual costs exceed the maximum grant awarded as agreed in the grant offer letter, SEMLEP is not obliged to increase the grant amount.

Payment of the grant will be made into your bank account via BACs.

SEMLEP expects that a grant will be claimed using the timescales detailed in the application milestones based on the completion date of the project and expected claim date provided in the customer grant application.

If you experience difficulties in delivering any output outlined in the grant offer letter, please contact us as soon as possible so that we can understand and discuss the options in relation to the grant payment. *Please note that we reserve the right to claim the grant funding back from you if you do not achieve the expected outcome agreed on the contract, as per your grant application see section 8 clawback below.

8. Clawback

SEMLEP reserves the right to recover all or part of the grant it has provided if:

- The organisation is found to have improperly tried to influence the decision of any officer/staff member with regards to the award of the grant.
- The organisation is taken over, merges or ceases to trade for whatever reason within a six-month period from receipt of the grant.
- Any information provided in the application form or other correspondence is found to be substantially incorrect, misleading, incomplete or altered.
- The organisation fails to comply with any of the terms and conditions of this project.
- You do not provide the outputs profiled on the grant application.

9. Documents required for your grant claim

To claim the grant, you must provide SEMLEP with a signed copy of the contract (which we will supply with your grant offer letter). You will also need to provide proof of expenditure to suppliers in the form of a redacted business bank statement evidencing the payment(s) being made. Payment of supplier invoices cannot be made by cash or contra arrangements.

If you cannot provide the evidence of payments, we will not be able to pay your grant claim.

If the invoices are paid using a credit facility, the grant cannot be claimed from SEMLEP until defrayal (when the money leave your bank account) for the credit owed has been paid from the organisation's bank account. The evidence required to make a claim would be a copy of the supplier invoice(s), a credit card statement (or similar) showing payment of the invoice(s) and a redacted business bank statement blanking out any other expenditure that is not related to the project claim.

Funding cannot be awarded as retrospective payment for goods or services procured before a formal offer of grant has been received and accepted.

10. Individuals progressing to paid employment / education

Your contract will include the number of participants that you anticipate will progress either into education, paid employment as a result of support from this project.

We will require appropriate and applicable evidence.

Evidence required:

EVIDENCE OF PROGRESSION – PG01 Paid Employment (minimum 1 hour per week)	
Evidence Required	**This deliverable must be achieved within 28 days of the participant's completion of the ESF funded activity** **IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE:** **Employed** 1. Letter on letter headed paper or with Company Stamp from the employer confirming the participant's permanent full-time or part time employment. This must show the job title, start date and hours contracted. 2. E-mail from the Employer showing Employer name, title, and Company details, start date and hours contracted. 3. Contract of employment **Self Employed** 1. Copy of the letter from HMRC evidencing registration 2. Bank statement for business account 3. Registration with Companies House. The evidence must show that they have started employment.

EVIDENCE OF PROGRESSION – PG03 Education	
Evidence Required	1. copy of Enrolment / Registration Form OR 2. where applicable a copy of the College ILR OR 3. signed letter of confirmation of enrolment from the provider The evidence must show that they have started education or training.

11. VAT

Organisations which are VAT registered will have their grant assessed on the net cost of eligible projects i.e. excluding VAT. If the organisation is unsure whether they are or not VAT registered, then they must seek advice from HM Revenue & Customs.

12. Contract Management and Review

If awarded a grant towards eligible project costs, you are required to ensure that original documentation relating to SEMLEP's forms that will be completed by learners, your project, its implementation, and its financing, are sent to SEMLEP with your final claim as we are required to keep this information until a date to be notified by the Managing Authority. This is currently expected to be at least 31st December 2030. The list of documents includes:

- Your grant funding agreement
- The invoices and paperwork related to your grant claim
- A copy of your organisation's bank statement showing receipt of the ESF grant

You should ensure that you are able to make original documentation or verified true copies relating to your project and its implementation and its financing available to auditors when required.

Quality monitoring visits may be carried out at any time to ensure delivery is robust and targets are being met. Organisations are expected to fully cooperate with these visits including allowing access to any learners, premises or information relating to the project.

There is a range of documentation that organisations MUST complete during the programme.

This includes:

- Fully completed learner enrolment forms
- Robust review of how you have recognised and recorded learner progression and achievement (for non-accredited learning programmes)
- At least 3 case studies, a template will be provided
- Detailed financial return that includes all eligible spend that matches the grant amount, and receipts that evidence spend
- Timesheet for each participant on the programme
- Proof that the participant is eligible to work in the UK
- Initial assessment of Math's and English for every learner
- Certificate of achievement when accredited learning has been delivered
- Progression form for every learner
- Self-assessment report that evaluates the programme.

SEMLEP reserves the right to visit you to ensure the grant has been used for the purpose it was intended as stated in the application form and to inspect records to show costs have been incurred by you.

Monthly monitoring

- It is a requirement of the ESFA to provide monthly monitoring information on participants engagement and progression.

- ST01   Learner Assessment and Plan
- PG01   Progression Paid Employment [EMP]
- PG03   Progression Employment [EDU]

It is very important that if anything changes about your project e.g. timescales, participant engagements or progressions, or if you are experiencing unexpected difficulties with your project, that you contact us as soon as possible to discuss the options.

Your final grant payment will not be issued until all evidence, reports, and participant documentation has been reviewed and validated.

As outlined in the introduction, the ESF monitoring requirements are stringent, and failure to adhere to them will result in grant payments being withheld.

The following monitoring information will be required on a monthly basis:

- Number of participants helped into employment
- Qualification level or module achieved
- Progression into further learning/education
- Soft outcomes achieved by the participants such as increasing confidence or removing barriers to employment

In addition, records will need to be maintained for each participant in your project comprising of the following:

- Evidence that participants are eligible for funding from the Community Grants Programme (eligibility criteria are that the participant is legally resident in the UK, able to take paid employment in a European Member State, aged 16 years or older, and that activity takes place in England)
- Evidence to show that a robust initial assessment, including information, advice and guidance (IAG) has taken place and the outcome recorded on an individual learning plan (ILP)
- Evidence that an induction has taken place and that it includes a narrative outlining the contribution from ESF
- Individual learning record (ILR) or enrolment form to cover all details required in the ILR specification, evidence that an ILP is in place which details all learning activities, outcome of initial assessment etc.
- Where relevant, evidence confirming registration of each awarding body where accredited learning is being delivered
- Evidence of attendance records and progress reviews which take place at regular intervals

Please note that SEMLEP will provide advice and templates during the mandatory project management workshop to enable you to provide this information.

13.   Marketing and Publicity

The European Commission has set out specific guidelines relating to the marketing and publicity activities of all organisations involved in the delivery of the Community Grants programme. This

document summarises the European Social Fund (ESF) branding requirements and lays out the marketing and publicity requirements in detail.

a) Why is marketing and publicity important?

These guidelines aim to help successful grant applicants to promote and publicise the activities funded by the grants and the impact of this money in the local community.

The consequences of non-compliance are potentially serious and could lead to a reduction of the funding paid to each project. Furthermore, the ESF managing authority will audit the communications within each project, so it is important that projects not only meet the requirements set out here but also retain verifiable evidence that communication activities and publicity materials are fully compliant.

To help ensure the publicity requirements are being implemented in full, it's a good idea to put someone in place within your organisation who is responsible for managing communications and marketing for the project.

b) Different types of marketing and publicity

The publicity requirements vary depending on the type of communications activity.

The principle is that all materials and documents must acknowledge and reference the funding received from ESF and ESFA. To ensure a consistent visual identity for the Community Grants programme, you will be provided with a joint logo that acknowledges both funders and that all grants recipients must use.

- **Posters**

Successful grant applicants will receive a project poster from SEMLEP prior to the commencement of their activities. You must display at least one poster at each location where the project is being delivered to participants. You can use identical posters at each location, providing that the content is accurate for all locations. The logo must be prominently displayed.

Posters must be visible, placed in the entrance area and large enough so that they can be seen by members of the public.

- **Print and publications**

The logo must be used on all printed documents and publications, including:

- display banners and posters
- newsletters
- general or job advertisements and notices
- job descriptions
- promotional materials like leaflets, brochures, flyers and invitations
- business cards, stationery, letterheads and compliment slips.

c) About the logo

The logo should be produced in colour on a white background.

The logo must:

- be applied prominently and consistently on all websites, publicity materials and project documentation related to the project.
- be placed in a prominent and suitable position
- measure, at a minimum, 40mm in width
- have an appropriate clearance zone around it. The background of the document should be uncluttered and provide enough contrast to ensure clarity
- stay in proportion and be clear to read

If used alongside other logos, the joint ESF and ESFA Logo should be at least equal in size to the largest of the other logos and appropriate to the scale of the material and documents being used.

The logo must not:

- be stretched, squashed or broken up
- be reproduced in a different colour scheme or typeface
- be edited or have any other wording or illustration added to it
- be blurred, rotated or distorted

d) Informing participants

As well as promoting the role of ESF and ESFA on your written and electronic materials, you must also make sure that participants are notified that the money for the project has come from both these sources.

Please ensure that ESF and ESFA are acknowledged to participants:

- during induction sessions, including when completing the project entry form
- in all support and paperwork provided to participants.
- in internal newsletters and bulletins
- in any leaflets explaining the European investment in the project
- in all communication activities.

e) Providing evidence of marketing and publicity

During the monitoring of your project, we will make regular checks of the publicity and promotional materials organisations are producing. We may ask you send us a sample of these.

We suggest that you:

- Put someone in place who is responsible for managing communications, publicity and marketing for the project
- Send us drafts of your publicity materials before you publish anything. This will prevent errors from slipping through that may result in publicity needing to be withdrawn and reissued

- Keep originals. If you reference a communication activity anywhere in your project work, then you must have evidence of this to hand. Verification and audit visits will look at publicity as a matter of course and if a particular item is missing or incorrect

14. General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

For the purposes of relevant data protection legislation, the DfE is the data controller for personal data processed by the ESFA. Please see our Privacy Policy for more information.

In the case of a successful application, once your organisation enters into a contract with SEMLEP, personal information will be used by the DfE to exercise its functions and to meet its statutory responsibilities, including under the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 and to create and maintain a unique learner number (ULN) and a personal learning record (PLR). Your information will be securely destroyed after it is no longer required for these purposes.

Your information may be shared with third parties for education, training, employment and well-being related purposes, including for research. This will only take place where the law allows it and the sharing is in compliance with data protection legislation. The English European Social Fund (ESF) Managing Authority (or agents acting on its behalf) may contact you in order for them to carry out research and evaluation to inform the effectiveness of training.

15. Contact Us

If you have any queries, please contact us on 01234 436100 or at communitygrants@semlep.com

The postal address is:
Community Grants - SEMLEP, Cranfield Innovation Centre, University Way, Cranfield, Bedfordshire MK43 0BT.