

PETROC

Grants Scheme - Framework and Processes

STRAND 1



HM Government



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Introduction

This document will detail the processes followed for the Employability Grants Devon scheme led by Petroc. Employability Grants Devon is Strand 1 of the Community Renewal Fund, *Innovation for Youth and Community project*. The grants scheme was designed for organisations or businesses actively supporting and encouraging employment and individual progression. Applicants could apply for grants from £10,000.00 - £30,000.00 and the grants could be used to fund activities that supported the unemployed or economically inactive to make their next steps towards work or education including moving into active job search, engaging in life skills or with the benefits system. There were a range of activities that were funded, such as traditional employment workshops and therapeutic employment coaching. Other more innovative activities include 'The Great Skills Tour of Tavistock' - a series of mini masterclasses delivered by local employers, and 'HI to Thrive' - a unique and tailored programme for young neurodivergent people.

The grants scheme targeted small organisations, many of whom have not been in receipt of this type of funding. For many of them, the application process created a valuable learning experience, and one that they will be able to utilise when applying for future grants and bids.

Employability Grants Devon was designed for organisations that delivered activity in the Devon County Council districts, consisting of North Devon, Torridge, Mid Devon, East Devon, South Hams, Teignbridge, Exeter and West Devon. The participants had no other eligibility criteria other than living in the Devon County Council districts and all activity taking place within the districts. The applicants were expected to have a minimum of 10 participant outputs, with this number increasing if a larger grant was applied for. Outcomes were dependent on the size of the grant allocation and were reviewed and approved by the panel.



Figure 1
Map of Devon County Council Districts

Preparation phase

Prior planning included identifying the appraisal panel and determining the procedure that would be followed to allow for a fast and effective process when appraising the applications. The appraisal panel consisted of Petroc members of staff from a range of departments, all with varying areas of expertise.

The preparation phase also consisted of the production of the participant paperwork to collate the required data from participants, the formation of the database to record the required data and the creation of other forms, such as the Final Report template and the Case Study template. Finally, the routes for promoting the project were identified and as many organisations as possible were contacted to promote and inform them of the scheme.

Marketing and publicising the Grants Scheme

The Project Manager worked with the marketing team to create some targeted Social Media posts. This was done through the use of hashtags and boosted posts, which targeted key demographics, such as 18–65-year-olds, the locations specified as above and other key words such as community, employability and Grants Scheme. The Social Media posts were distributed multiple times to gain as much coverage as possible, through different websites, such as Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.

In addition to Social Media posts, the Project Manager created copy that was included in local newsletters, such as the local district newsletters, informing organisations of the grants scheme and the relevant deadline. The Project Manager also reached out directly to contacts from previous projects notifying them of the potential opportunity. Finally, relevant staff members at the local district councils were advised of the grants scheme and asked to share the information with any organisations that they thought may have been interested.

Devon Communities Together provided capacity building support by promoting the grants scheme through their well-established network and providing support to some applicants throughout the application process.

Application Process

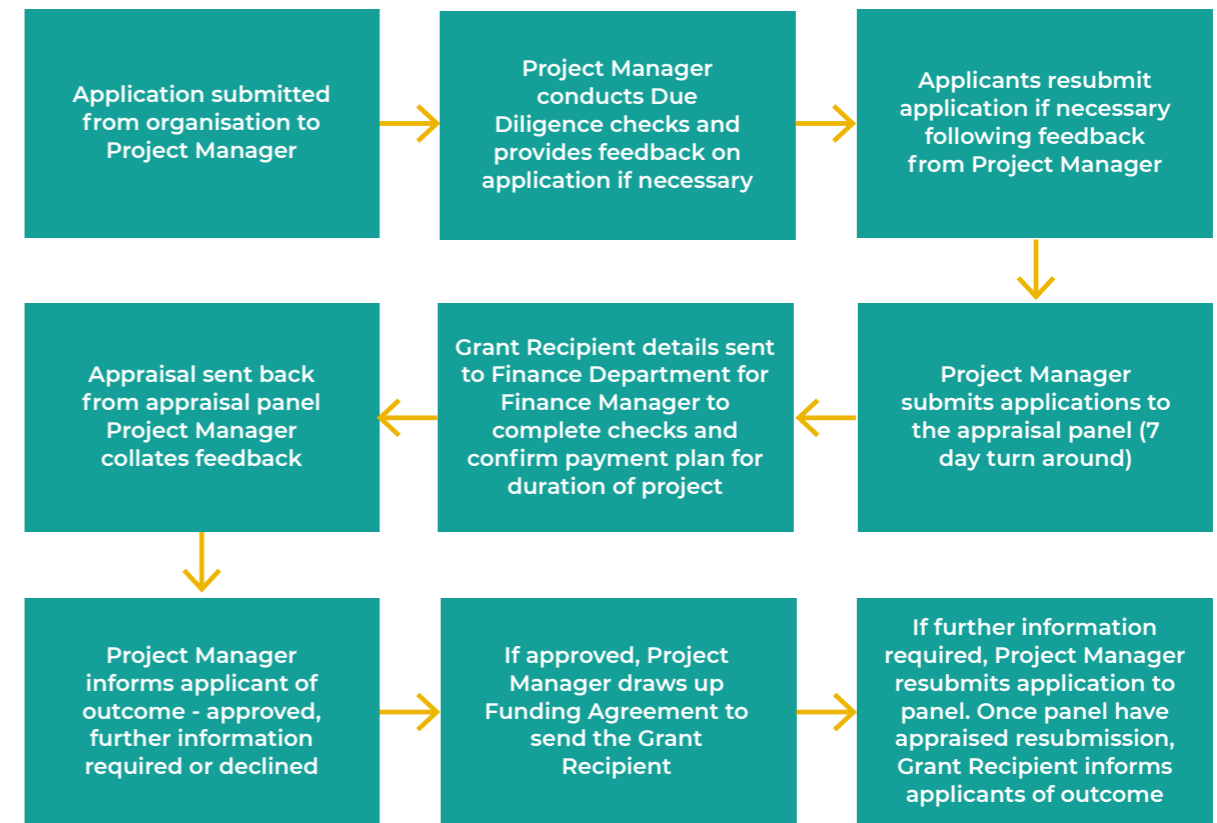







Figure 2
Petroc Application Process







Once the Funding Agreement has been signed by both parties, a Purchase Order can then be raised, and a request for the first invoice sent to the Grant Recipient, along with the countersigned copy for their records.

A Grant Recipient Guide (See appendix) was created by the Project Manager and sent to the Grant Recipients upon approval of their project application. This guide contained detailed guidance of how to complete and submit:

-  Participant paperwork
-  Finance guidance and how to complete the expenditure spreadsheet
-  Sense-check process
-  Publicity guidance
-  Final submissions upon completion of the project (including the Final Report and Case Study) and evaluation

This guide was communicated to the Grant Recipient along with a set of documents including:

-  Participant paperwork
-  Final report template
-  Case Study template
-  Expenditure spreadsheet

Project Delivery

Whilst project activity is taking place, the Project Manager ensured there was constant communication with the Grant Recipients. This was in the form of reviews, which consisted of video calls to check progress and answer any queries. The Grant Recipients were made aware that if they had any queries, they could email or call and that they would be supported throughout the project.

All Grant Recipients were asked to submit participant paperwork in a timely manner, to ensure that the paperwork was processed prior to a participant leaving the project. Feedback was submitted to them if there were any queries with the paperwork.

Dependent on the recommended payment schedule, Grant Recipients were requested for invoices on the basis that paperwork had been received in line with their targeted outputs, and that their financial expenditure had been updated with project spend that had been incurred.



Project closedown process

Once project delivery has completed and all participants have completed the exit paperwork, there are a number of tasks that Grant Recipients must follow:

- ✓ All **participant paperwork** must be submitted to be processed
- ✓ The **Final Report** must be submitted
- ✓ At least one **Case Study** must be submitted
- ✓ **Final expenditure** must be submitted with all project related spend. Once this has been submitted, a breakdown of costs will be requested, and a sense-check of the spend will then be carried out. A sample of invoices and defrayal evidence will be requested against the spend and compliance checks will be undertaken.
- ✓ If a Grant Recipient identified in their application that they would be submitting extra value-added, including an **Innovation Plan, Feasibility Study, Decarbonisation Plan and a Collaborative agreement** with other organisation(s) to share knowledge and best practice, then evidence of the achievement of these must be submitted, as per the Funding Agreement in the outcomes section.
- ✓ Finally, Clarity, the evaluators on the project, interviewed some of the Grant Recipients once project delivery had completed. This was used to feed into their **evaluation** of the overall project.

Once the above has been completed, the Grant Recipients will be requested to submit their final invoice.

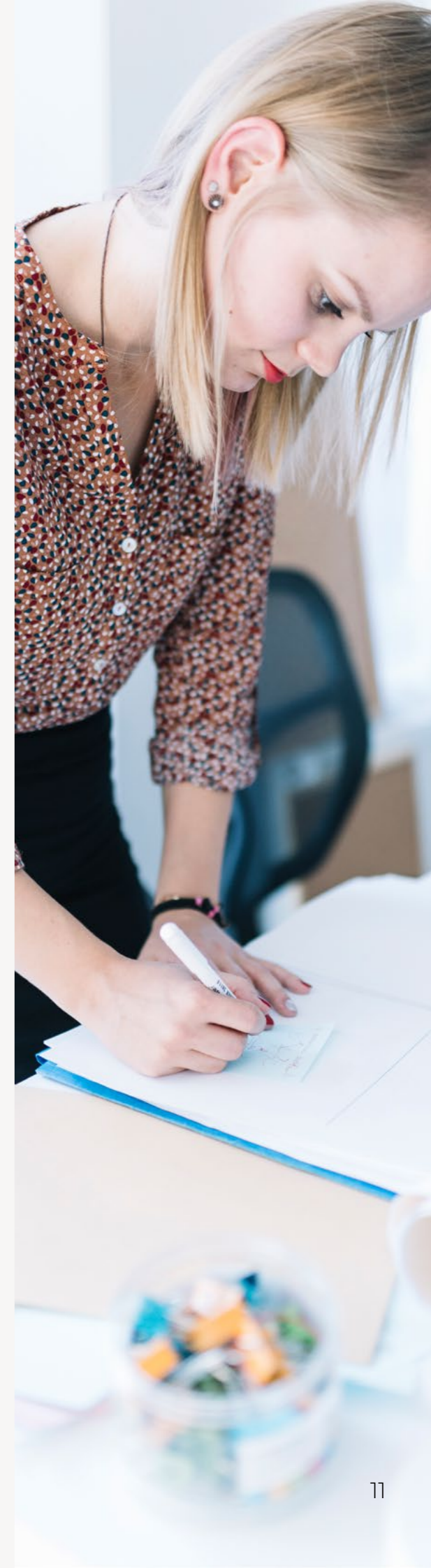


Conclusion

The Grants Scheme was successful and produced excellent results, with a number of participants progressing into employment, job search, education, engaging with the benefits system and increasing their life skills. There was also a number of high quality extra value-added items produced from the organisations, such as Innovation Plans, Decarbonisation Plans, Feasibility Studies and collaborative agreements with other organisation(s) to share knowledge and best practice.

The communication between the Project Manager and the applicants was consistent and timely, and the appraisal panel reviewed applications and provided feedback promptly. This resulted in the application and decision-making process being efficient and with minimal delays, and the applicants being informed of the outcome of their application within a short timeframe. This meant that whilst the delivery timeframe was brief, the applicants could focus on the recruitment of participants to commence delivery.

The strict timeframes caused minor problems for some of the Grant Recipients due to the organisations needing to get delivery started within weeks of their application being approved. If an organisation wasn't established within their local community, this sometimes caused difficulties when recruiting participants for the project. Additionally, the Grant Recipients had a short amount of time to submit their final submissions. However, the Project Manager worked with them to ensure projects were completed and closed down in the correct manner.



There are a number of lessons learnt from the project; the majority relating to the strict timeframes of the project.

- As discussed above, if Grant Recipients were able to have a longer project duration, this would have allowed for them to have a longer set up phase, contributing to more participants being recruited.
- This being said, the project did exceed outputs.
- More delivery time would also have resulted in further outcomes, as participants would have spent more time on project activity.
- Finally, the appraisal panel could have included external members if there was a longer preparation phase. Having external panel members would have allowed for a broader range of views from different organisations.

The purpose of this framework is to share the best practice learnt and to help other organisations across Devon and beyond to implement and deliver similar grants schemes in the future.

Feedback from Grant Recipients

The following feedback have been compiled from the Grants Recipients final reports which indicate the learning experience from participating in this scheme.

“The positive outcomes and impact it has had on our residents will help the charity to attract further grants as we have proved results.”

“Yes, it was a positive experience. It was thorough and well laid out and fairly straightforward to complete”

“This project has helped us to pilot new ideas and pave new pathways”



“We have developed our confidence with relating to funders”

“We have developed our understanding of how to measure the impact we can have as an organisation”

“To keep a good level of communication with the project lead. The Project Manager was wonderful, and very fast to respond every time. It helped us to understand how we can communicate better in future”

“Yes, as a first time applicant - this process was very helpful and supportive”



Appendices



Employability Grants Devon Grant Recipient Guide



Grant Recipient Final Report template



Case study template



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