



Invitation to tender for the
**‘Provision of learning and impact evaluation
support to the Housing & Homelessness fund’**

Terms of Reference

This fund is supported by Oak Foundation. Through its grant-making, Oak Foundation contributes to a safer, fairer, and more sustainable world.

1.0 Introduction

The Community Foundation for Northern Ireland (CFNI) is an 'independent, grant making trust, inspiring generosity, and achieving impact across Northern Ireland'.

The Foundation's vision is 'a fair and equitable society for everyone' and our mission is 'to work hand in hand with communities to build a better future'.

<https://communityfoundationni.org/>

Our primary function is the management of 60+ funds in collaboration with our donors and partners.

Currently one of our key funds is the Housing & Homelessness fund, which is supported by Oak Foundation.

<https://oakfnd.org/>

2.0 Housing & Homelessness Fund

The aim of the Housing & Homelessness Fund is to support voluntary and community sector organisations serving those who are homeless or housing insecure, through developing their ability to support their service users.

Awards have been made under two categories:

'Stage 1' grants (up to £25k); these awards are focused on supporting capacity building and developmental work;

'Stage 2' grants (up to £100k); these awards are focused on supporting service delivery by organisations who have previously received 'Stage 1' developmental support.

Through this funding grantees are expected to address at least one of the following priority areas:

(a) Renter rights

- Help renters on low incomes to access decent homes at genuinely affordable rent levels;
- Support renters in enforcing their rights, including in relation to tenancies, disrepair and preventing eviction;
- Uncover and challenge discrimination which excludes people from accessing affordable and safe homes.

Target outcome – More renters are able to access their housing rights and live in decent and affordable

(b) Supply and access to genuinely affordable and decent homes

- Campaign to improve supply of homes that are affordable for people with the lowest income and/or facing the most discrimination;
- Support different models of community ownership that benefit people with the greatest housing need;
- Empower communities to advocate for more homes that meet housing need.

Target outcome – Increased supply of new and existing genuinely affordable and decent homes

(c) Reduction and prevention of homelessness

- Empower and support people through services that break the cycle of homelessness;
- Develop stronger advocacy and campaigning to prevent all forms of homelessness.

Target outcome – People are supported to avoid homelessness

In addition to the grant funding the Community Foundation has commissioned Homeless Connect to encourage & support grantees to build lived experience input into their operational delivery and strategic planning.

<https://homelessconnect.org/>

We also plan to organise learning & networking events to encourage collaboration and information sharing amongst grantees.

The initial round of grants was awarded in July 2025, and the fund is scheduled to complete in March 2030.

Grantees are listed in Appendix A (**NB** – stage 1 grantees will be invited to submit applications for stage 2 funding, probably in Q4 2026).

3.0 Terms of Reference

The Community Foundation is seeking a suitable individual/s or organisation to support our efforts to learn from and evaluate the impact of the Housing and Homelessness fund.

We are seeking an insightful collaboration which will enhance our learning & knowledge, and help us identify & action any opportunities for improving the fund's impact and our fund management practices.

We are keen to ensure that this commission brings added value and enables us to build upon the information & learning we will glean from our own contact with grantees via monitoring reports & conversations.

To this end we expect the commission to include the following:

- A review of the impact & value of the lived experience engagement element – both in terms of the additionality provided by Homeless Connect's input/contract and the actual impact of those with lived experience on grantees' operations & strategic development (both currently & subsequent to Homeless Connect's support);
- A review of the impact & value of the developmental work undertaken by the stage 1 grantees, to help shape/inform any subsequent stage 2 funding allocations;
- A review of the impact of the stage 2 projects, with a particular focus on how this work fits within & complements the wider housing & homelessness policy/operational context and agenda across Northern Ireland;
- Direct engagement with service users to support/enhance the information obtained from monitoring returns & direct grantee engagement;
- A review of the effectiveness & impact of this fund in supporting the delivery of Oak Foundation's three objectives in Northern Ireland;
- A review of the effectiveness & value of Oak Foundation funding the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland to re-grant and support efforts to address homelessness & housing insecurity on their behalf.

3.1 Anticipated outputs:

- Report on lived experience element (interim March 2027, final March 2030* tbc);
- Report on developmental work undertaken by Stage 1 grantees (October 2026);

- Report on effectiveness & impact of the service delivery work undertaken by Stage 2 grantees; how effectively this complements wider efforts to address housing insecurity & homelessness across Northern Ireland; and how effective the re-granting process has proved (interim March 2027, final March 2030* tbc).

* This date is likely to be foreshortened to end 2028/early 2029

3.2 Anticipated outcomes:

- The Community Foundation & Homeless Connect are able to make informed decisions on maximising the impact & value of the lived experience support element, and are able to make any required amendments in a timely manner;
- The Community Foundation is able to make informed decisions on where any further resources for Stage 1 grantees should most fruitfully be focused;
- Oak Foundation & the Community Foundation have a clear picture of combined impact of the funded projects, collaborative working and shared learning;
- Oak Foundation & the Community Foundation have a clear picture of the impact of both stage 1 & stage 2 awards, and are able to make informed decisions on the value of sustaining this re-granting & local support approach beyond March 2030.

4.0 Timeframe

Activity under the Housing & Homelessness fund is scheduled to run until March 2030.

It is expected that individual reports will be produced in a timely manner at points appropriate to their focus. Specific timings will be subject to review as the commission progresses.

5.0 Budget

The maximum budget currently available for this commission is £57k (inclusive of VAT & expenses).

6.0 Submissions

Tenders should be submitted electronically to:

rrogers@communityfoundationni.org

and should comprise **a maximum of eight pages** covering the following:

- Your proposed methodology, detailing your approach to this commission and demonstrating how you will ensure that objectives are met;
- A detailed breakdown of your budget showing daily rates, days assigned to the various tasks, expenses, and VAT (if applicable);
- How you propose to bring additionality & insight to this commission, to enhance the fund's impact and increase the Community Foundation's knowledge;
- Details of the individual/s who will be delivering this commission, highlighting their relevant skills & experience;
- Details of two clients for whom you have completed relevant assignments and who could be contacted for references prior to appointment.

In addition you should submit one relevant report, demonstrating your ability to produce high quality, informative documents.

7.0 Selection

Step 1: pass/fail

- Submission includes all of the requested information;
- Individual/s involved have clearly demonstrated relevant skills & experience.

Submissions which do not meet the above requirements will not proceed to assessment & scoring.

Step 2: scoring

- Proposed approach & methodology are clearly presented and thought out, and provide confidence that the commission's requirements will be delivered successfully (60%);
- Budget is clear, realistic & provides good value (10%);
- Ability to add value and bring insight & creativity to commission is clearly demonstrated (30%).

In the event that the scoring process does not result in a clear winner, the Community Foundation may invite shortlisted bidders to a presentation/interview..

Please note that the Community Foundation is not obliged to accept the lowest or any tender

8.0 Queries

Queries / clarification requests will only be accepted electronically and should be submitted to Richard Rogers, Grants Manager, at:

rrogers@communityfoundationni.org

9.0 Submission deadline

Tuesday 30th September 2025 at 4 p.m.

Submissions received after this deadline will not be considered.

Appendix A

Stage 1 grantees

- Ardoyne Association
- Disability Action
- HERe NI
- Hosford Community Homes
- Money Ready
- NI Youth Forum
- Shelter
- Simon Community
- The Advantage Foundation

NB it is anticipated that two additional stage 1 awards will be made in August/September 2025

Stage 2 grantees

- Depaul
- Housing Rights Service
- Mindwise NV
- North Down & Ards Women's Aid

NB It is anticipated that a further 4-5 stage 2 awards will be made in late 2026 / early 2027.