

# CCIF Guidance & Application Form Template

Through the customer and community investment fund, we strengthen local connections and drive positive change in the places we serve. Since 2018, the fund has provided support to small and medium-sized organisations, focusing on projects within 15 miles of our route.

CCIF supports a wide range of initiatives, including mental health, environmental sustainability, equality, diversity and inclusion, and education and employability. Through this funding, communities are able to improve wellbeing, reduce isolation and access essential skills and resources, helping people feel more connected, resilient and supported.

## Contents

- Guidance: P1– 6
  - Application Form Template: P7
- 

This document explains who can apply, what we fund, and how to complete a strong application.

Please read this document in full before starting your application.

## Who Can Apply

We welcome applications from:

- Registered charities
- Community groups
- Community Interest Companies (CICs)
- Co-operative societies
- Limited companies
- Community Rail Partnerships
- Business partnerships
- Schools (extracurricular projects only)

If you are unsure about eligibility, please contact [CCIF@Iner.co.uk](mailto:CCIF@Iner.co.uk).

---

## Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible:

- **Location:** Your project must be based within **15 miles of the LNER route** in England or Scotland.
    - [The LNER Network](#)
  - **Organisation size:** We prefer to support **small and medium sized organisations** with incomes between £10,000 – £1million.
  - **Funding range:** You may request **between £1,000 and £10,000**. Requests above £10,000 will not be considered.
  - **Funder preference:** We prefer to be the sole funder or one of two funders. **We do not support projects with more than two funders.**
  - **Project duration:** All activity must be deliverable within **one financial year (April–March)**.
  - **Staff costs:** Staff costs are eligible but must relate directly to the project and must not exceed **25% of the amount requested**. Core costs (e.g., salaries or general running costs) are not eligible.
  - **Capital works:** We **do not fund capital projects** (e.g., new buildings, major refurbishments).
- 

## Funding Priorities

Your project must clearly align with **one** of the three CCIF priorities:

**Better for People** – *Fostering a culture of equality, that champions diversity and inclusivity.*

- Supporting diverse and inclusive community projects, creating opportunities for learning and social mobility.
- Creating a culture of positive mental health, bringing people and communities together.

**Better for Places** – *Creating skilled and inclusive communities along our networks that can thrive.*

- A focus on building skills, promoting employability and education amongst marginalised groups by investing in the skills requirements of now and in the future.

**Better for Planet** – *Conserve resources, reduce waste and reuse where possible*

Supporting environmental projects and encouraging sustainable mobility within communities. There are three areas we would like applications to focus on:

- **Biodiversity** – projects on rewilding areas, creating new or extending existing wildlife corridors and regeneration of urban spaces
- **Sustainable Travel** – projects that encourage communities to travel more sustainably, to and from LNER train stations.

- **Waste Reduction and the Circular Economy** – projects that would help LNER to reduce or repurpose materials into a reusable asset.

---

## Before You Apply: What We're Looking For

When you apply to CCIF, make sure your application is **clear, concise, and addresses the following key points:**

Strong applications are:

**Clear and concise:** Explain the need, activities, and intended impact using plain language.

- **Align with a Priority:** Your project **must support one of our three priorities** – Better for People, Better for Places, or Better for Planet. Clearly indicate which priority your project addresses and why.
- **Identify the Need:** Provide a **brief, factual description of the need or problem** your project will tackle, **how you identified this need, and what your project will do** to make a difference.
- **Budget Breakdown:** Needs to be include
  - How much funding you're requesting (up to £10,000)
  - The **total project cost**
  - How the funding will be allocated across the project
  - Any other funding or match funding that will support the project.

This enables us to see how CCIF funding will be used.

- **Project Timeline:** Include a **month-by-month timeline** for your project, so we know when key activities will happen and that you can complete the work within one year. The timeline should start in March and continue through to April of the next year to match the financial year.
  - **Beneficiaries:** Describe **who will benefit from your project** – for example, specific groups or communities – and **approximately how many people** you expect to reach.
  - **Impact and Evaluation:** The application needs to clearly detail the **benefits your project will deliver** and **what success looks like** (including targets & KPI's). Be specific about **how you will capture and measure the project's impact** (e.g., through surveys, reports, or feedback).
-

## Preparing Your Application

Read and review the application form template – located on page 7

### a. Need

Describe the problem or issue your project will address, why it matters, and who is affected.

### b. Beneficiaries

Tell us:

- Who will benefit
- Approximate number of people reached
- Why this group is targeted

### c. Activities & timeline

Provide a **month-by-month plan** covering the 12-month delivery period.

### d. Budget

Your budget must include:

- Total project cost
- CCIF contribution and what it will fund
- Match or in-kind contributions, where relevant

Applications without a cost breakdown will not be considered.

### e. Impact & evaluation

Explain:

- What success looks like, targets and KPI's
  - How outcomes will be measured
  - What data or feedback methods you will use
-

## Submitting Your Application

### How to apply

Applications must be submitted **online** via the LNER website when the application window opens.

### Document upload rules

You may upload **one** supporting document only, which may include:

- A 2-page Word or PDF file
- A two-worksheet Excel file

Additional pages or worksheets will not be considered.

### Character limits

- Project summary: 600 characters
- Priorities: 3,000 characters
- Project scope: 6,000 characters
- Organisation aims & activities: 3,000 characters

### Important notes

- **Please complete the form in one sitting — it does not auto-save.**
  - Once submitted, you will see an on-screen confirmation message.
  - **You will not receive an email confirmation.**
- 

## Assessment Process & Timeline

### Application window

- Opens: **July / August**
- Closes: **August / September**

### Assessment stages

1. **Review & shortlisting** (September – October)
2. **Community and customer voting** (November)  
– Shortlisted projects are shared with colleagues, stakeholders, charities, and customers.
3. **Final approvals** (December – March)
4. **Award notifications** (April / May)

## Delivery requirements

- Projects must be completed within the financial year in which funding is granted.
  - Funding must be fully spent or committed by **March**.
- 

## Common Mistakes to Avoid

Applications are often delayed or unsuccessful due to:

- Missing or unclear beneficiary numbers
- Vague timelines
- Staff costs over 25% of the amount requested
- No budget breakdown
- Unspecified activities
- Requesting more than £10,000

Check your application carefully before submitting.

---

## Additional Information

We may request further information by email or phone during assessment.

Please also tell us:

- About any funding your organisation has secured in the last two years
- How this funding was spent
- What the organisation delivered with that support

If your project requires staff involvement from LNER (e.g., station access, volunteering, training), please contact us in advance to confirm feasibility.

---

## Contact

For questions or guidance, email:

[CCIF@lner.co.uk](mailto:CCIF@lner.co.uk)

# Application Form Template

## Conflict of interest

**Do you have any actual or potential conflicts of interest relating to this application or the proposed project?**

Yes     No

### Guidance

A **conflict of interest** arises where an individual or organisation connected to this application has personal, professional, or financial interests that could, or could be perceived to, influence decisions relating to LNER CCI funding.

This may include (but is not limited to) situations where:

- A trustee, staff member, or volunteer of your organisation has a **close personal relationship** (e.g. family member or partner) with an LNER employee involved in the CCI Fund
- An LNER employee involved in assessing or overseeing the fund is also a **trustee, advisor, volunteer, or recent employee** of your organisation
- An individual connected to the application or project delivery could **benefit financially**, directly or indirectly, from the funding
- An individual holds **decision-making roles in more than one organisation** applying to the same CCI funding round

If you are unsure whether something constitutes a conflict of interest, please select **Yes** and provide details.

Declaring a conflict of interest will not negatively affect your application.

Failure to declare a relevant conflict may result in your application being withdrawn.

**If you answered "Yes", please provide details below:**

- Nature of the conflict
- Individuals involved
- How the conflict will be managed (e.g. individuals stepping away from decisions, independent oversight, transparent procurement)

<b>Application Form Template</b>	
<b>Registered Company Name</b>	
<b>Registered Company or Charity Number</b>	
<b>Annual Income</b>	<i>Your organisation's most recent annual income.</i>
<b>Company / Organization Name</b>	
<b>Project Name</b>	
<b>Primary contact name, phone number, and email address</b>	<i>We may contact this person if we need further information</i>
<b>Secondary contact email address if required</b>	
<b>City/Town/Village</b>	
<b>Post code</b>	
<b>Nearest Station</b>	<i>Select the closest station to your project.</i>
<b>Brief Project Summary</b> <i>Maximum 600 characters including spaces</i>	<b>Provide a clear overview of your project.</b> The information you include here will be used externally to support the final decision-making process on which projects receive funding.
<b>Who will benefit from your project?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approximate number of beneficiaries</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which groups or communities?</li> <li>• Primary age group (if relevant)</li> </ul>
<b>Priorities</b>	Please tick the priority the application will support. <b>Only one priority can be chosen.</b>

<p>Maximum 3,000 characters including spaces</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Better for People  <input type="checkbox"/> Better for Places  <input type="checkbox"/> Better for Planet</p>
<p><b>Explain how your project supports your chosen priority.</b></p> <p>You may include how your project supports additional priorities if this is relevant to your application.</p>	
<p><b>Project Scope</b>  Maximum 6000 characters including spaces</p>	<p><b>Answer the following questions when completing this section.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the specific need or problem your project will address, and how was it identified?</li> <li>• How will you use this funding to address the identified need? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What activities will you deliver?</li> <li>○ Who will deliver them?</li> <li>○ Where will they take place?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <i>What positive changes would this grant make to the lives of people who use your project/service?</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Total CCIF amount requested</b></p>	<p>The proposal should set out how much funding is requested from LNER's Customer and Community Investment Fund.</p>
<p><b>Total cost of project. Including a breakdown of costs.</b></p>	<p><b>Applications without a full cost breakdown will not be considered.</b></p> <p><b>The maximum amount that can be applied for is £10,000.</b></p> <p>Provide a clear breakdown of costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total project costs</li> <li>• Amount requested from CCIF (£1,000–£10,000)</li> <li>• Itemised breakdown of costs</li> <li>• Any confirmed or expected match funding</li> </ul> <p><b>Funder preference:</b> We prefer to be the sole funder or one of two funders. <b>We do not support projects with more than two funders.</b></p>
<p><b>Match funding (if applicable)</b></p>	<p>Tell us about any additional funding or in-kind support (e.g., volunteer time, donated resources). This is not essential but will be viewed positively.</p>

<b>Project Benefits</b>	<p><b>Answer the following questions when completing this section.</b></p> <p>Explain the benefits your project will deliver What will constitute a successful project?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the expected outcomes?</li> <li>• Include targets you expect to achieve or deliver.</li> <li>• Please explain how you will measure, capture, and report on the positive changes made.</li> </ul>
<b>Timescales</b>	<p>Provide a month-by-month timeline covering April to March, showing key activities and milestones</p> <p>Projects must be completed within the financial year in which funding is granted.</p>
<b>Organisation's Aims &amp; Experience</b> <i>Maximum 3000 characters including spaces</i>	<p><i>Tell us about your organisation, your experience delivering similar work, and why you are well placed to deliver this project.</i></p>
<b>How do you ensure safeguarding for your beneficiaries and team?</b>	
<b>Additional Information</b>	