**Social Opportunities for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) – Grant Funding**

Children and young people with SEND in Herefordshire have told us that they want to have better access to inclusive social opportunities outside of the school day. In Herefordshire, there are a number of providers who offer inclusive or SEND-specific opportunities for children and young people with SEND to engage in clubs, leisure activities and social events but there are areas where there are very few opportunities that meet the needs of this cohort, due to the location or the activity not being accessible / inclusive or not being of interest to the children or young people.

We are offering grant funding to local organisations to deliver social opportunities that enables children and young people with SEND (age 0 – 25) to do something fun, with their peers, in their local community. If you already work with children and young people with SEND and would like to expand what you do, or you would like to be able to develop a new opportunity for children and young people with SEND to access a social activity, this grant is a chance to make a meaningful impact.

**Grant Overview**

**Maximum Grant Amount**: £15,000

**Purpose:** To support activities that will enable children and young people with SEND to access social opportunities in their local community.

**Eligibility:** Organisations must demonstrate how they will:

* engage children and young people with SEND in their local community
* use the grant to make a measurable impact on children and young people with SEND in terms of their access to social opportunities in their local community

Applications will be accepted from formally constituted community and voluntary groups/organisations, groups of people with the same community focus or charity objectives and Town & Parish Councils (for service or activity excluding facilities or items provided for in the Parish Precept).

**Eligible activities:** Grant funding can be used for social opportunities that:

* support the provision of regular, inclusive universal and targeted activities to support children and young people with SEND in Herefordshire
* demonstrate a commitment to the ongoing provision of inclusive activities for children and young people with SEND. This will include the requirement to demonstrate how sustainable the project will be after this grant intervention
* enable children and young people with SEND to meet the intended outcomes for Herefordshire children and young people (see below). Applicants will need to articulate in the application which outcomes they intend to meet as part of the project
* provide a social opportunity within the county of Herefordshire to ensure Herefordshire families benefit from the grant

Applicants will be required to demonstrate how projects will meet the following outcomes for children and young people with SEND:

* Have fun
* Take part in interesting activities and new experiences
* Be safe
* Develop positive life and social skills
* Spend time with friends and make new ones
* Be more independent or confident
* Prepare for life as an adult

With a specific focus on children and young people with SEND, priority will be given to proposals which:

* improve access to services in Herefordshire by children and young people from Herefordshire
* increase community involvement and foster good relations with disabled and non-disabled children/ young people
* are co-produced with children with SEND and their families
* demonstrate relevance to the local community
* meet relevant quality and safety standards
* maximise the number of beneficiaries
* demonstrate special educational needs / disability knowledge and appropriate training
* expand an existing or offer a new activity in Herefordshire.
* demonstrate sustainability incl. coverage of any associated/ ongoing revenue costs
* show innovation and creativity
* demonstrate value for money
* minimises environmental impact/ delivers positive environmental impact

The grant will not fund projects to meet the requirements of disability legislation or any other statutory requirements, projects outside of the Herefordshire County border, projects for the benefit of an individual, or any projects already underway or already completed. Projects cannot support any religious or political activities.

**Timescales:**

All grant funds must be committed by 31st March 2025.

**Reporting Requirements:**

Successful applicants will be required to submit evidence of impact through an evaluation report within 6 months of completion, which will evidence access, usage and delivery against the intended outcomes for children and young people. This will include feedback from children and young people with SEND who have accessed the improved/ new activity and any relevant case studies.

**Application Process**:

Application Deadline: **Midnight on Tuesday 11th March 2025**.

Evaluation and award: before the end of March 2025.

To apply or for support with this process, please contact:

localoffer@herefordshire.gov.uk

**Application Appraisal:**

Applications will be evaluated against how well the project meets the grant criteria; however, geographical spread of activities across the county will also be a determining factor in the evaluation process, to ensure children and young people across Herefordshire can benefit.

Bids will be evaluated by a panel of appointed representatives which will include:

* Minimum of 1 child / young person representative
* Minimum of 1 family representative
* Children with Disabilities Team representative
* Commissioning Manager and Commissioning Officer

Should the situation be that there are more applications than there is funding, the panel will use the assessment process to ensure that the projects who best meet the criteria and provide value for money are awarded the grant funding.

The Director for Education, Skills and Learning will determine grant awards in accordance with the scheme criteria and having regard to the recommendations of the appraisal panel.