FUNDING GUIDANCE

FOUNDATION FUND: FOCUSED ROUND

2026

GO! LONDON

CHANGING THE LIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE

FUNDED BY

MAYOR OF LONDON

LONDON MARATHON FOUNDATION INSPIRING ACTIVITY

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INTRODUCTION

This guidance is for the Go! London Foundation Fund: Focused Round, which will operate through a two-stage application process:

Stage 1: Expressions of Interest (EOIs) will be open from **3 November until 5pm on 27 November**.

Stage 2: Following a review of EOIs, shortlisted applicants will be invited to submit a full application between 7 December and 5pm on 11 January.

The guidance is designed to help you decide whether your work aligns with the aims of this round of funding. You can find further information on the fund's webpage. This includes Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), which will be regularly updated and which you are encouraged to read.

If this guidance and the FAQs don't answer your question, or if you have any accessibility needs, feel free to contact us on **0203 291 3021** during office hours or email GoLondon@rocketsciencelab.co.uk.



BACKGROUND

This £22.5 million partnership from the Mayor of London, London Marathon Foundation and Sport England, supported by London Marathon Events and London Sport, enables underserved young Londoners aged 4–24 to fulfil their potential through sport and physical activity.

By bringing together funding, insight and expertise from across the sector, we are simplifying the grant-funding landscape and strengthening London's community sport sector. Our focus is on creating lasting change for young people while supporting the organisations and communities that help make that change possible.

Go! London aims to:

- Harness the power of sport and physical activity to help underserved young Londoners fulfil their potential.
- Strengthen London's community sport sector so it can better meet the needs of underserved children and young people.
- Reduce the barriers that prevent too many young people from participating in sport and physical activity.

Go! London offers a range of funding and capacity building initiatives for community organisations, including Foundation grants.

GO! LONDON FOUNDATION FUND

FOCUSED ROUND

Every child and young person in London should have the opportunity to be active and enjoy the benefits that sport and physical activity can bring. Being active can improve physical and mental wellbeing, build confidence, develop life skills, strengthen social connections, and create pathways into education, employment and training.

However, more than half of young Londoners do not meet the recommended levels of physical activity. Participation is particularly low among young people facing multiple and overlapping inequalities, which can create significant barriers to being active.

Through previous Foundation funding rounds, Go! London has supported projects that have increased participation in sport and physical activity among underserved young Londoners, including some of the groups identified in this funding round. However, Go! London has not historically focused funding on organisations whose primary expertise is supporting young people facing complex challenges through specialist services and tailored support.



This funding round seeks to address that gap. We are looking to support organisations with expertise in working with one or more of the following groups:

- Children and young people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness
- Children and young people affected by domestic violence and abuse
- Children and young people leaving prison or with experience of the criminal justice system
- LGBTQ+ young people
- Care-experienced children and young people

We recognise that many young people within these groups face significant barriers to participation and may benefit from trusted relationships, targeted interventions and specialist provision that responds to their specific needs and experiences.

We are seeking to support organisations with specialist expertise working with these groups and to explore how sport and physical activity can be strengthened, expanded or embedded within existing services to improve outcomes for children and young people.

We are particularly interested in approaches that use sport and physical activity as part of a wider package of support, helping to improve physical and mental wellbeing, develop employability skills, strengthen community connections and improve safety for children and young people facing complex needs.

Further information about each group is provided below, recognising that there is significant intersectionality between the groups and that many children and young people will identify with, or experience, more than one of these circumstances.

YOUNG PEOPLE EXPERIENCING OR AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS:

An estimated 61,161[1] children and young people in London are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Young people experiencing homelessness often face barriers that extend beyond access to sport, including unstable housing, financial hardship and poor wellbeing. Sport and physical activity can provide structure, trusted relationships and a sense of belonging when delivered alongside wider support services.

YOUNG PEOPLE EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OR ABUSE:

An estimated 20,342[2] children and young people in London are experiencing domestic abuse in high-risk households. Children and young people affected by domestic abuse may experience trauma, isolation, reduced confidence and limited access to safe spaces. Sport and physical activity can provide safe spaces for healing, social connection and personal development when delivered through trauma-informed approaches

LGBTQ+ YOUNG PEOPLE:

An estimated 58,309[3] young people aged 16-24 in London identify as LGBTQ+. LGBTQ+ young people can face exclusion, discrimination and a lack of psychologically safe environments in sport and physical activity settings. Inclusive and affirming provision can help build confidence, belonging and positive social connections.

LEAVING PRISON OR HAVE EXPERIENCE OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM:

An estimated 1,723[4] young people leave prison or youth custody in London each year. Young people leaving custody often face barriers including social isolation, stigma and challenges accessing education, employment and positive community networks. Sport and physical activity can support engagement, trust-building, positive identity and progression into wider opportunities.

CARE-EXPERIENCED YOUNG PEOPLE:

There are an estimated 25,000[5] care-experienced children and young people in London. Care-experienced young people may experience instability, disrupted relationships, isolation and poorer wellbeing outcomes than their peers. Sport and physical activity can help create supportive communities, trusted relationships and opportunities to build confidence, resilience and a stronger sense of belonging.

We expect many projects to primarily engage young people aged 16-24. However, we recognise that some groups, particularly care-experienced children and young people, may require support at younger ages. Applications working with younger children are therefore welcome where there is a clear rationale and alignment with the aims of the fund.

[1] Estimate based on: London households in temporary accommodation with children; CHAIN reports on rough sleeping in London; and Centrepoint research on young people at risk of homelessness.

[2] Estimate based on: High-risk cases based on MARAC data and National Centre for Domestic Violence statistics. In total, 1 in 5 young people in the UK are estimated to experience domestic violence or abuse. This would take the affected population size in London to over 400,000 based on the 2021 census.

[3] Estimate based on: 2021 census data for 16-24 year olds in London.

[4] Estimate based on: a Centrepoint study showing 18-24s consistently comprise 16% of the prison population; Ministry of Justice data on adult releases in London; and Ministry of Justice data on number of children returning to London from local youth custody centres.

[5] Estimate based on: Department for Education data on children looked after by borough; and estimated 16,000 young care leavers expected to benefit from London's care leavers compact.



TYPE OF PROJECTS WE WILL FUND

We will fund projects that combine physical activity and sports with wraparound support and can demonstrate how these activities will contribute to one of the following outcomes:

- Improved mental wellbeing
- Improved employability
- Improved safety
- Improved community and social connection

Examples of wraparound support may include:

- Mentoring
- Employability support
- Careers advice
- Mental health and wellbeing support
- Volunteering opportunities
- Training and qualifications
- Pathways into further education, apprenticeships or employment.

FUNDING TIERS

We will fund projects delivered through one or both of the following support tiers. The tiers reflect different levels of intensity, duration, and wraparound support, depending on the needs of the children and young people being supported.

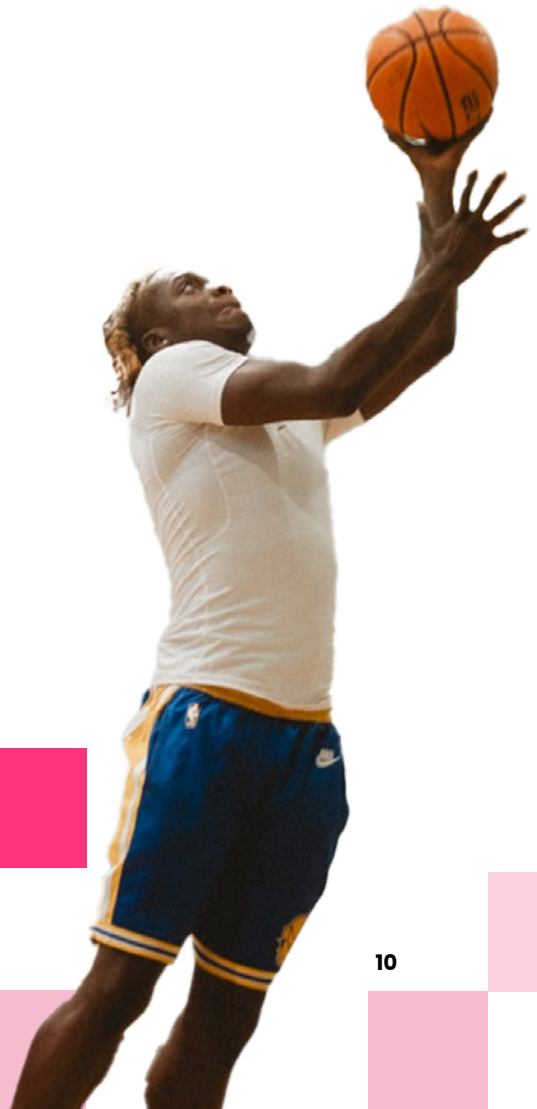
As part of your application, you will need to select the tier, or combination of tiers, that best reflects your proposed delivery model and intended outcomes.

TARGETED TIER	SPECIALISED TIER
Structured programmes for young people facing identifiable barriers to participation. Physical activity is combined with wraparound support to achieve a measurable social outcome.	Longer-term, intensive support for young people with complex needs. Physical activity is combined with tailored wraparound and specialist support to achieve a measurable social outcome.

The information below sets out the minimum expectations for each tier, including the type of support provided and the level of participant engagement expected.

These requirements are intended to ensure that children and young people receive sufficient support to achieve meaningful outcomes. Within this framework, organisations are encouraged to design programmes that reflect the needs of the young people they work with.

Organisations may apply for funding under either tier, or a combination of both tiers where this reflects their delivery model.



TIER	PURPOSE	DELIVERY MODEL	MINIMUM ENGAGEMENT EXPECTATIONS
Targeted	Increase activity levels and achieve one measurable social outcome.	• Physical activity combined with additional wraparound support • Accessible, safe and engaging physical activity sessions that encourage regular attendance • Wraparound support should be structured and designed to address barriers to participation and wider outcomes relevant to the target group(s).	• Projects should be designed to provide participants with at least 6 sport and physical activity sessions and 6 wraparound support sessions over a period of at least three months • Minimum session length: 1 hour
Specialised	Increase activity levels and achieve one measurable social outcome through tailored specialist support.	• Physical activity delivered as part of a specialist support offer • Accessible, safe and engaging physical activity sessions that encourage regular attendance • Support should be tailored and specialist, based on individual needs • Relationship-centred approaches that prioritise trust-building and sustained engagement • Appropriate referral pathways and multi-agency working where required	• Projects should be designed to provide participants with at least 8 sport and physical activity sessions and 8 wraparound support sessions over a period of at least six months • Minimum session length: 1 hour



WHAT YOU CAN APPLY FOR

GRANT SIZE

- Grants of up to £150,000 for projects delivered over a period of up to 24 months.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

- Funding is for project related costs, and you can allocate up to 20% of your total budget towards management or overhead expenses.
- For a full list of costs that we can and cannot fund please see our FAQs

DELIVERY REQUIREMENTS

All funded projects must:

- Deliver sport and physical activity sessions that align with one or more of the support tiers outlined above
- Provide wraparound support alongside physical activity provision.
- Engage children and young people aged 4 to 24 living in London who are from one of more of the following groups: experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness; have been impacted by domestic violence and abuse;are leaving prison or have experience of the criminal justice system; are LGBTQ+; or are care-experienced.
- Ensure that at least 30% of children and young people engaged through the project are new to the organisation (meaning they have not previously participated in the organisation's programmes or services).
- Demonstrate how the project will achieve this growth in reach. This may include increasing the capacity of existing provision, delivering additional sessions, or creating new opportunities for children and young people to engage in sport and physical activity.



FUNDING PRIORITIES

Priority will be given to organisations and projects that:

- Have a strong track record of working with one or more of the identified groups, demonstrating trusted relationships, relevant expertise and evidence of positive outcomes.
- Work collaboratively with partners and stakeholders, demonstrating formal or informal partnerships that improve reach and strengthen delivery.
- Involve young people in project design and organisational decision-making
- Are led by and for marginalised communities, with trustees, staff, or volunteers who have lived experience of the issues being addressed or belong to the communities being supported.
- Address gaps in local provision and make effective use of existing facilities and infrastructure

WHO SHOULD APPLY?

This funding round is primarily intended for specialist organisations whose core purpose is supporting one or more of the groups identified in this funding round.

Specialist organisations are organisations whose primary purpose is supporting a specific community or group of children and young people through tailored services that respond to their particular needs and experiences. This may include counselling, casework, advocacy, safeguarding, mentoring, practical support, or other trauma-informed approaches that help children and young people navigate challenges, build resilience and improve their wellbeing.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Before starting your application, please read the **Reporting Guidance** document, which includes the **Outputs and Outcomes Framework**. This framework sets out the key indicators and measures you will be required to report on, as well as the survey questions that will help demonstrate your project's progress against your selected outcome. Please note that the output and outcome framework is fixed, so you should consider which tier and outcome is most appropriate for the cohort of children and young people you support.

All funded projects must report on the following:

- Number and type of sessions delivered using Go! London funding
- Number of young people engaged
- Number of children and young people new to the organisation (minimum 30%)
- Number of children and young people demonstrating positive attitudes toward physical activity
- Number of young people who have increased their physical activity levels
- Report against **one social outcome**, using the relevant surveys listed in the **Outputs and Outcomes Framework**. The outcome areas for this round are mental wellbeing; employability; safety; and community and social connection

You will be required to upload this information through Upshot. If you receive a grant, you will receive access to this, along with training and support to help you use the system effectively.

ELIGIBILITY

To apply, you must:

- **Be a not-for-profit organisation, registered in the UK with a London-based address**
- **Have a governing document (e.g., constitution, trust deed, or articles of association)**
- **Have at least two trustees, directors, or committee members**
- **Have a bank account in your organisation's name**
- **Be able to provide 12 months of annual accounts**
- **If currently funded by Go! London, the existing grant must end before 1 April 2027 and all final reporting must be completed**
- **Have at least two years' experience delivering services directly to one or more of the identified target groups**
- **Demonstrate that at least 50% of your service users are from one or more of the identified target groups**
- **Pay at least the London Living Wage for any paid posts funded by the grant**
- **Have robust safeguarding measures in place**



Your Project Must:

- Work with underserved children and young people aged 4-24, living in London who belong to one or more of the identified priority groups
- Be delivered in London
- Have sport or physical activity, and wraparound support as core components

Note: Local authorities, schools, and private companies e.g. Companies Limited by Shares, private partnerships or sole traders are not eligible to apply. They may, however, support delivery as an unpaid partner.

HOW AND WHEN TO APPLY

To apply, you'll need to complete an online application form. You can access this via the Go! London website.

Applications for the Foundation Fund: Focused Round are submitted through a two-stage process.

Stage 1: Expressions of Interest (EOIs) will be open from 3 November until **5pm on 27 November**.

Stage 2: Shortlisted applicants will be invited to submit a full application between 7 December and **5pm on 11 January**.

Decisions will be made in March 2027, with project start dates expected from May 2027. We typically expect activity to commence within one month of the award date.

If this guidance document and the FAQs do not cover what you need to know, or if you have any accessibility requirements, please call 0203 291 3021 during office hours, or email GoLondon@rocketsciencelab.co.uk

We recognise that AI tools can be helpful when drafting grant applications, but they often generate broad or generic text. If you choose to use AI, please ensure your responses are tailored to your organisation, your project, and the specific needs of your local community.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Applicants are encouraged to access organisational development support provided by Bayes Business School. All applicants, whether successful or not, will receive further information on this offer as part of the application process.

MAKING DECISIONS

We aim to fund a wide range of projects across London, ensuring good representation of the groups identified in this funding round, a mix of sports and physical activities, a broad range of age groups, and strong geographical coverage.

These considerations may influence the final selection of projects for funding.

Full applications will be assessed using the scoring framework on the next page.



Criteria	Evidence Required	Weighting
Rationale/ Need	• Strong understanding of the issue or gap the project aims to address • Strong understanding of the target group • Clear articulation of relevant barriers • Explanation of why the project is needed now, supported by evidence from data or community insights (Application sections: Rationale)	**20%**
Project design	• Clear delivery model: frequency, duration, l ocation, and staffing • Inclusion of appropriate wraparound or specialist support • Alignment with Tier model • Sound plan for reaching the target group • Relevant and credible delivery partnerships and referral pathways, with partners' roles clearly explained • Sets out a clear purpose, with activities that are appropriate and likely to achieve the intended outcomes • Addresses the barriers and needs identified for the target group (Application sections: Project)	**20%**
Impact	• A clear and credible contribution to improved physical wellbeing and the selected secondary outcome • Clear link between project activities and other wider outcomes • Project provides clear added value • Proposed activities, number of participants and intended outcomes are realistic and proportionate to the project's scale and level of provision. (Application section: Impact and Outputs & Outcomes table)	**20%**

Criteria	Evidence Required	Weighting
Organisation and track record	• Relevant experience of working with the identified groups of young people, supported by examples from previous projects. • Evidence of relevant relationships, referral pathways and effective partnership working (Organisation and Track Record)	**20%**
Youth Voice & Lived Experience	• Involvement of young people in design of project • Inclusion of people with lived experience in leadership or delivery (Youth voice, lived experience)	**10%**
Budget and value for money	• Budget reflects the activities described in the application • Costs proportionate to the scale, frequency, and intensity of delivery • Use of existing resources, partnerships, or infrastructure (Budget)	**10%**

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