

Fisheries and Seafood Scheme Re-Launches

The Fisheries and Seafood Scheme (FaSS) has relaunched today (13 April) to help support the long-term sustainability, resilience, and prosperity of the seafood sector across England.

Following the initial success of the scheme, which first opened last year, at least £6 million in funding has been secured every year until April 2025, providing long term investment to the sector.

The scheme will continue to fund projects that boost business resilience and increase sustainability across our world-class fishing industry, further strengthening support for food producers across the catching, processing and aquaculture sectors.

This builds on the work of the first year of the scheme, which saw more than 500 projects approved for a range of seafood and marine businesses, charities and other organisations.

Improvements this year include simplified guidance, enhanced levels of funding for micro-entities and funding that is better targeted at the sector's needs.

Regular reviews will ensure FaSS continues to evolve over the next three years to reflect feedback from across the sector, evolving policies and the needs of the industry.

The scheme will continue to be administered by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) on behalf of Defra. The MMO has a team ready to provide advice and support to potential applicants.

Fisheries Minister Victoria Prentis said:

The Fisheries and Seafood Scheme has already approved 500 projects for funding across our sector. Through the scheme, we are better able to target support and invest in projects that champion the seafood sector and support its long-term sustainability.

We have expanded the scheme until 2025, providing a welcome boost for coastal communities around the country. I urge all eligible organisations to apply.

Tom McCormack, Chief Executive Officer of the MMO, said:

The MMO wants our fishing and seafood sectors to continue to develop, adapt and ultimately succeed as we move forward into our

new era as an independent coastal state.

We look forward to working with applicants from across England and supporting our fishing and seafood communities through the continuation of the already successful Fisheries and Seafood Scheme

Defra and the MMO will continue to work with industry to provide financial assistance through the FaSS to deliver sustainable growth in the catching, processing and aquaculture sectors, boosting coastal businesses and communities. In addition, FaSS will also deliver some funding through more flexible calls for projects, based on specific policies.

For projects which last less than a year, the MMO recommends that applicants aim to complete their project within the same financial year as application. To ensure long-term support is delivered to the sector, the FaSS will now also support multi-annual projects which can be completed up until the end of February 2025.

Notes to editors:

- The scheme draws on the £13.5 million allocated annually to the sector in England through the recent three-year spending review settlement. This covers grants, technical assistance, the data collection framework and control and enforcement.
- The devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will announce their own schemes in due course.
- Further detail on the Fisheries and Seafood Scheme can be found on the [scheme webpage](#).

Thousands of new community volunteering opportunities thanks to government investment

- Organisations in arts, culture, sport, civil society, youth and heritage to benefit from the £4.6 million fund
- Funding to increase volunteering opportunities for young people and those who experience barriers to accessing volunteering

Thousands of young people, people with disabilities and those experiencing

loneliness will get the opportunity to volunteer and help others thanks to £4.6 million in government investment.

More than 160 community organisations will be able to support 7,800 new volunteering opportunities over the next two years as the government confirms the beneficiaries of the Volunteering Futures Fund.

The fund was launched last year and will be distributed by Arts Council England (ACE). It will break down barriers to volunteering and enable organisations across the arts, culture, sport, civil society, youth and heritage sectors to continue their valuable work within local communities while volunteers enjoy the personal benefits of making a difference.

ACE has awarded funding to organisations including colleges, local councils, schools, health and wellbeing organisations in response to demand from a wide range of beneficiaries such as people experiencing loneliness or social isolation, young people in the LGBTQ community, and people with learning difficulties and complex needs.

Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries said:

Volunteering offers a wealth of benefits to those involved and the organisations which rely on the help.

Our new support will deliver a step-change for those who may be isolated, lonely or experiencing any number of potential barriers to getting involved in volunteering.

More than 160 organisations across the country will benefit and we will see better collaboration between local councils, the public sector and civil society.

Beneficiaries of the Volunteering Futures Fund include:

The Bureau Centre for the Arts in Blackburn and Darwen, which will be able to roll out a new two-year programme to engage hundreds of local young people in culture, sport and heritage volunteering. It will result in a digital portfolio toolkit that can be replicated in other towns. The centre will work with Blackburn Rovers Community Trust, Blackburn Museum, Blackburn with Darwen Library Service, Lancashire Wildlife Trust, Blackburn Festival of Light, Blackburn Youth Zone with 11 other partners.

The Festival of Thrift in Redcar will deliver a collaborative volunteer recruitment, training and development programme covering music, visual arts and performance. It will enable greater volunteering capacity across the Tees Valley in a safe, supported way, providing opportunities for progression and a shared experience. It will work with BloominArt, Curious Arts, Hartlepool

Waterfront Festival, Stellar Projects and eight other partners.

Barnsley Museums will establish new partnerships between local stakeholders in Barnsley to offer new, high quality volunteer opportunities. It will develop skills and address loneliness and isolation and prioritise those most in need who face barriers to participation. Barnsley Museums will work with Feels Like Home, Barnsley College and Inclusion in Action among other partners.

Other beneficiaries include museums in Cumbria, Birmingham and Tyne and Wear. The Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games festival and cultural festivals in Brighton and Cleveland will also benefit, as will local authorities in Bassetlaw, Hertfordshire and the Midlands.

The first round of the Volunteering Futures Fund already up and running through government and Pears and NHS Charities Together funding include Sense, a national disability charity that has launched a Virtual Buddy Scheme which pairs those with complex disabilities with a volunteer.

In addition, the Birmingham Community Healthcare Charity and Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust are currently developing volunteering opportunities for young people including improving digital skills and testing new approaches to volunteering to further expand opportunities through the fund.

Grants of £100,000 or more have been awarded following an ACE competitive process launched in November 2021. There are 19 lead organisations that will work with more than 160 partner organisations to deliver volunteering opportunities at a local level across England.

An additional £2.2 million is being distributed by Pears Foundation and NHS Charities Together.

Darren Henley, CEO of Arts Council England said:

There's an abundance of evidence to show that volunteering can be a key factor in helping people lead happier lives.

This new investment will enrich villages, towns and cities across England, increasing health and well-being and decreasing loneliness and isolation.

Cath Ford, Director of The Bureau Centre for the Arts said:

We have one of the youngest populations in Europe, and this funding will enable us to work with our local partners to provide young people with training, mentoring and a range of opportunities to volunteer across the borough.

This is an investment in our borough's future, an opportunity to actively engage more young people in culture, sport and heritage, helping them to discover their passions, contribute to their community and develop future leaders."

Emma Whitenstall and Stella Hall – CoDirectors Festival of Thrift said:

We are overjoyed to receive this funding at such a challenging time for many people! The past ten years have seen Festival of Thrift expand from an annual weekend event into an amazing year-round programme of activities focusing on sustainability.

We are delighted to be working with our partners at the Tees Valley Festivals Network to deliver this volunteering project to offer people living in Tees Valley new training and skills opportunities that are directly linked to some of the best events and festivals in the UK.

Lynn Dunning, Head of Barnsley Museums, said:

Volunteering is vital to the cultural sector and offers huge advantages to both the individual and the organisation. This funding will allow us to establish high quality volunteering opportunities that will offer personal and lifelong benefits to those taking part.

They will develop new skills, offer avenues into work, support health and wellbeing and boost confidence. Doing so in collaboration with a range of community partners and lived experience.

We really want to showcase the impacts that volunteering can have and also how Culture can really add value to lives and communities.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

1. The first round of Volunteering Futures Fund grants was launched in September 2021 when DCMS ran a competition for matched funders here.

2. The second round of Volunteering Futures Fund grants was launched by Arts Council England in November 2021 [here](#).
3. Further details of Volunteering Futures Fund grants awarded by Pears Foundation [here](#).
4. Further details of Volunteering Futures Fund grants awarded by NHS Charities Together [here](#).
5. A full list of the 19 lead organisations receiving VFF funding is below:

Headline data for Volunteering Futures Fund

Total awarded organisations: 19 Total amount awarded: £4,650,483

ACE Area	Awards	Amount
London	2	£489,996
Midlands	4	£1,187,000
North	8	£2,024,575
South East	3	£638,912
South West	2	£310,000
Totals	19	£4,650,483

Awards

Lead applicant	£ Awarded	Discipline/Artform	ACE Area	Local Authority
Barnsley Museums	£180,000	Museums	North	Barnsley
Cultural Services – Portsmouth City Council	£130,000	Combined arts	South West	Portsmouth
Ignite Imaginations	£135,000	Combined arts	North	Sheffield
Active Communities Network	£245,000	Combined arts	London	Southwark
Higher Rhythm Ltd	£214,994	Music	North	Doncaster
Kirklees Theatre Trust	£124,957	Combined arts	North	Kirklees
Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums	£400,000	Combined arts	North	Newcastle upon Tyne
Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery	£490,000	Museums	North	Carlisle
Arts & Health South West	£180,000	Combined arts	South West	Exeter

Lead applicant	£ Awarded	Discipline/Artform	ACE Area	Local Authority
Culture, Learning and Libraries (Midlands) Inspire Youth Arts	£262,000	Combined arts	Midlands	Nottingham
Bassetlaw Community & Voluntary Service	£220,000	Not discipline specific	Midlands	Bassetlaw
Culture Central	£525,000	Combined arts	Midlands	Coventry
Festival of Thrift	£180,000	Combined arts	North	Redcar and Cleveland
Hertfordshire Library Service	£185,000	Libraries	South East	Welwyn Hatfield
The Bureau Centre for the Arts CIC	£299,624	Combined arts	North	Blackburn with Darwen
Things Made Public CIC	£250,000	Not discipline specific	South East	Basildon
Ledbury Poetry Festival	£180,000	Literature	Midlands	Herefordshire, County of
Brighton Dome & Festival Limited	£203,912	Not discipline specific	South East	Brighton and Hove
London Wildlife Trust	£244,996	Literature	London	Westminster

[Communities in Wales handed control of £585 million to level up in Wales](#)

- Funding will match what was previously spent in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and each part of England
- New approach will slash bureaucracy and give control to locally elected leaders

Communities in Wales will benefit from £585 million of funding being allocated today to help spread opportunity and level up the country.

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund will see places in Wales that need it most draw up plans this year to deliver on their local priorities, based on a conditional allocation of funding over the next three years. This could include regenerating rundown high streets, fighting anti-social behaviour and crime, or helping more people into decent jobs – helping to revive communities, tackle economic decline and reverse geographical disparities in Wales and across the UK.

Spreading opportunity and prosperity to all parts of the UK through community-led investment, local areas in Wales will see £585 million made available under the fund.

The funding delivers on the UK Government's commitment to match the previous EU funding from the European Social Fund and European Regional Development Fund. However, the fund will be much more flexible and locally led, freeing communities in Wales from the bureaucratic, rigid and complex processes of the EU Structural Funds.

Bureaucracy will be slashed, and there will be far more discretion over what money is spent on. EU requirements for match funding, which impacted on poorer places, will be abolished. Instead of regional agencies, funding decisions will be made by elected leaders in local government, with input from local members of parliament and local businesses and voluntary groups.

The new fund also includes over £101 million for Wales for an adult numeracy programme, Multiply, which will support people with no or low-level maths skills get back into work. The scheme will offer free personal tutoring, digital training, and flexible courses to improve adults' confidence and numeracy skills.

Driving forward the missions in the government's Levelling Up White Paper, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund is in addition to other levelling up funding for Wales, including the Community Ownership Fund and the Levelling Up Fund, which has already invested £121m into Wales, and £790 million for city and growth deals.

This is in addition to the record £18 billion per year block grant settlement announced by the UK Government for Wales – the largest since devolution over 20 years ago and an increase of £2.5 billion.

Secretary of State for Levelling Up Rt Hon Michael Gove MP said:

We have taken back control of our money from the EU and we are empowering those who know their communities in Wales best to deliver on their priorities.

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund will help to unleash the creativity and talent of communities that have for too long been overlooked and undervalued.

By allocating more than half a billion pounds for communities up and down Wales, we will help to spread opportunity, increase prosperity and level up every corner of the UK.

Secretary of State for Wales Simon Hart said:

This is a huge boost for people across Wales, who will now have access to this fund to level up their communities and make

decisions about where they want to see the money spent. The Shared Prosperity Fund will bind together the whole of the UK, while tackling inequality and deprivation across all four nations.

I'm sure that the proposals for spending the fund will lead to substantive improvements to people's lives in Wales, especially in areas where there is the greatest need.

People in every nation and region want to see politicians acting together on the common challenges we all face and I look forward to working closely with the Welsh Government.

The allocation formula for UK Shared Prosperity Fund takes into account both the local population data, and a broadly based measure of need, including factors like unemployment and income levels. This is to ensure the most amount of money is going to areas which will truly benefit from the fund.

Funding for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund across the UK will be £2.6 billion between 2022 and 2025, with this figure reaching £1.5 billion per year by March 2025, delivering on the UK Government's commitment to match the average spending of EU structural funds over the previous programme.

Previous EU programmes ramped up and down, and areas will continue to receive EU funding until the end of 2024. Similarly, UK Shared Prosperity Fund will be increased from £400 million in 2022/23 to £1.5 billion in 2024/25, at which point it will match the EU funds it has replaced.

[CMA welcomes Sony and Nintendo's gaming subscription improvements](#)

Press release

The CMA welcomes improvements made by Sony and Nintendo to their gaming subscription practices and has now closed its investigation into the online gaming sector.



The Competition and Markets Authority's (CMA) sector-wide investigation looked at subscriptions for online gaming services where people automatically continue to be charged indefinitely until they take action to end their contract. The CMA was particularly concerned that people might find themselves locked into paying for services they no longer want or use.

The CMA has secured an undertaking from Sony relating to its PlayStation Plus product, a service which allows users to play online together. In particular, Sony has agreed to put in place measures to protect customers who haven't used their memberships for a long time but are still paying. Sony will contact these customers to remind them how to stop payments and, if they continue not to use their memberships, Sony will ultimately stop taking further payments.

The CMA also engaged with Nintendo, which changed its business practices during the course of the investigation so that Nintendo Switch Online Service is no longer sold with automatic renewal set as the default option. This means people will not be automatically entering into renewing contracts, addressing a number of the CMA's concerns about people becoming locked in.

Michael Grenfell, Executive Director of Enforcement at the CMA, said:

As a result of our investigations, a number of changes have been made across this sector to protect customers and help tackle concerns about auto-renewing subscriptions.

Today's announcement therefore concludes our investigations into the online video gaming sector. Companies in other sectors which offer subscriptions that auto-renew should review their practices to ensure they comply with consumer protection law.

This announcement follows undertakings [agreed with Microsoft in January 2022](#) in relation to its online gaming subscriptions.

More information about the CMA's investigation is available on the [online gaming sector case page](#).

The CMA also recently launched the '[Online Rip-Off Tip-Off](#)', a campaign designed to make shoppers aware of the importance of understanding the terms

of any deal they sign up to, giving out practical tips to help them protect themselves when shopping online.

1. For media enquiries, contact the CMA press office on 020 3738 6460 or press@cma.gov.uk.
2. Sony, as referred above, refers to Sony Interactive Entertainment Network Europe Limited.
3. Nintendo, as referred above, refers to Nintendo of Europe GmbH.
4. The undertaking referred to above applies to contracts between Sony and consumers for the supply of (a) PlayStation Plus, or (b) any online video gaming product which replaces, rebrands or includes PlayStation Plus (in whole or in part) and which is associated with a console and (in the case of either (a) or (b)) which is or can be subject to recurring billing. The undertaking builds on Sony's existing practices which include providing information and notifications to consumers when entering into PlayStation Plus subscriptions.
5. For the avoidance of doubt, the offering of this undertaking is not an admission that any person or firm has breached the law. Only a court can decide whether a breach has occurred.
6. An undertaking is a voluntary agreement a firm makes to address an enforcement authority's concerns and resolve an investigation without the need for court action.
7. The key pieces of consumer protection legislation relevant to the CMA's investigation are: the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 (CPRs); Part 2 of the Consumer Rights Act 2015 (CRA); and the Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013 (CCRs). The CPRs contain a general prohibition against unfair commercial practices and specific prohibitions against misleading actions, misleading omissions and aggressive commercial practices. Part 2 of the CRA aims to protect consumers against unfair contract terms and notices and requires contract terms to be fair and transparent. The CCRs regulate the information that should be provided to consumers before they make a purchase, cancellation rights for certain contracts and the use of pre-ticked boxes for additional payments.
8. As part of its broader programme of work investigating unfair auto-renewal terms and practices, the CMA also secured undertakings from businesses offering anti-virus software services and published compliance principles for the sector. Details of the undertakings and the compliance principles can be found on the [Anti-virus software investigation case page](#).

Published 13 April 2022

Communities across UK handed control of £2.6 billion levelling up funding

- UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) to spread opportunity and reverse the country's geographical disparities with £2.6 billion in funding
- Funding will match what was previously spent in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and each LEP area in England
- New approach will slash bureaucracy and give control to locally elected leaders

Communities across the United Kingdom will benefit from £2.6 billion of funding being allocated today to help spread opportunity and level up the country.

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund will see places that need it most draw up plans this year to deliver on their local priorities, based on a conditional allocation of funding over the next three years. This could include regenerating rundown high streets, fighting anti-social behaviour and crime, or helping more people into decent jobs – helping to revive communities, tackle economic decline and reverse geographical disparities in the UK.

Spreading opportunity and prosperity to all parts of the UK through community-led investment, local areas across England will see £1.58 billion, Scotland £212 million, Wales £585 million and Northern Ireland £127 million made available under the fund.

The funding delivers on the UK government's commitment to match the previous EU funding from the European Social Fund and European Regional Development Fund. However, the fund will be much more flexible and locally led, freeing communities from the bureaucratic, rigid and complex processes of the EU Structural Funds.

Bureaucracy will be slashed, and there will be far more discretion over what money is spent on. EU requirements for match funding, which impacted on poorer places, will be abolished. Instead of regional agencies, funding decisions will be made by elected leaders in local government, with input from local members of parliament and local businesses and voluntary groups.

The fund also includes a new £559 million adult numeracy programme for the whole UK, Multiply, which will support people with no or low-level maths skills get back into work. The scheme will offer free personal tutoring, digital training, and flexible courses to improve adults' confidence and numeracy skills.

Driving forward the missions in the government's [Levelling Up White Paper](#), this fund is in addition to other levelling up funding, including the £4.8 billion [Levelling Up Fund](#), £150 million [Community Ownership Fund](#) and £3.6 billion [Towns Fund](#). On top of this, we're making available an additional £3.7 billion to councils this year.

The Spending Review also increased Scottish Government funding in each year by an average of £4.6 billion, Welsh Government funding by £2.5 billion, and £1.6 billion for the Northern Ireland Executive, delivering in real terms the largest block grants for the devolved administrations since the devolution settlements of 1998.

Secretary of State for Levelling Up Rt Hon Michael Gove MP said:

We have taken back control of our money from the EU and we are empowering those who know their communities best to deliver on their priorities.

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund will help to unleash the creativity and talent of communities that have for too long been overlooked and undervalued.

By targeting this funding at areas of the country that need it the most, we will help spread opportunity and level up in every part of the United Kingdom.

The allocation formula for UK Shared Prosperity Fund takes into account both the local population data, and a broadly based measure of need, including factors like unemployment and income levels. This is to ensure the most amount of money is going to areas which will truly benefit from the fund.

Funding for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will be £2.6 billion between 2022 and 2025, with this figure reaching £1.5 billion per year by March 2025, delivering on the UK government's commitment to match the average spending of EU structural funds over the previous programme. Previous EU programmes ramped up and down, and areas will continue to receive EU funding until the end of 2024. Similarly, UK Shared Prosperity Fund will be increased from £400 million in 2022/23 to £1.5 billion in 2024/25, at which point it will match the EU funds it has replaced.

In England each Local Enterprise Partnership area will receive the same in real terms as it used to under EU funding, and within each Local Enterprise Partnership area an index of need will be used to allocated funding to each local authority. Scotland and Wales will receive the same in real terms as they used to receive under EU funding, and an index of need will be used to allocate funds to authorities and regions within Scotland and Wales. Based on consultation with local government and the Scottish and Welsh governments these indexes will be bespoke to their local situations. Northern Ireland will receive a single allocation and will draw up a single investment plan for all of the country.

UK summary including Multiply

Nation	Allocation
England	£1,588 million
Scotland	£ 212 million

Nation	Allocation
Wales	£585 million
Northern Ireland	£127 million
Sub total (UK)	£2.5 billion
Multiply central element*	£129 million
Total (UK)	£2.6 billion

*This relates to a UK-wide digital platform for adult numeracy, as well as a programme of evaluation, including randomised control trials, to build the evidence of what works.