



## **VICTIMS SUPPORT PROGRAMME**

**2026 – 2028**

**Health and wellbeing support and services  
for victims and survivors of the  
Troubles/conflict**

# **GRANT FUNDING CALL Application Guidance**

**This guidance is applicable to those applicants who wish to apply for over £30K per annum only.**

**For those applying to the Small Grants Funding Programme (under £30K per annum) please refer to the Victims Support Programme Application Guidance (Small Grants).**

**This Application Guidance document should be read alongside the [Victims Support Programme 2026-28 Strategic Context and Background Information document.](#)**

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# 1. Overview of the Application Process

The Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) is opening a funding call for applications to deliver health and wellbeing support for victims and survivors of the Troubles/conflict [\(as defined by the 2006 order\)](#) through the **Victims Support Programme 2026 – 2028**.

Detailed information on the Victims Support Programme 2026-28 is set out in **Section 5 of the Strategic Context and Background Information document**.

**It is advised that organisations proposing to submit a funding application read all detail in this document thoroughly alongside the Strategic Context and Background Information document.**

**Organisations must ensure they are familiar with the application process and aware of all deliverables.**

**VSS retains the right to extend this Victims Support Programme beyond March 2028 in line with the outcome of this funding call.**

## 2. Funding period, expected programme value<sup>1</sup> and eligible area<sup>2</sup>

### Funding period

- Funding applications can be submitted for projects for a two-year period covering 1 April 2026 – 31 March 2028.

### Expected Programme Value

- Year 1 £7.9m
- Year 2 £8.0m

### Eligible Area

- The Victim Support Programme is open to applications from organisations who are located within Northern Ireland.
- Health and wellbeing support and services can be provided to victims and survivors who are resident outside of NI, through organisations located in NI.

Funding applications should align to the VSS service delivery model outlined within Section 4 of the **Strategic Context and Background Information document**.

This call seeks to achieve **regional cover** for support and service provision throughout NI. In addition, it seeks to ensure that there is a **wide range** of community and voluntary organisations providing support and services to victims and survivors to offer maximum accessibility.

Project delivery must be **realistic** and **offer value for money** with a **clear and demonstrated focus** on improving the **health and wellbeing** of victims and survivors.

**VSS will not fund any one single project application to a value in excess of 30% of the total budget available for the Victims Support Programme.**

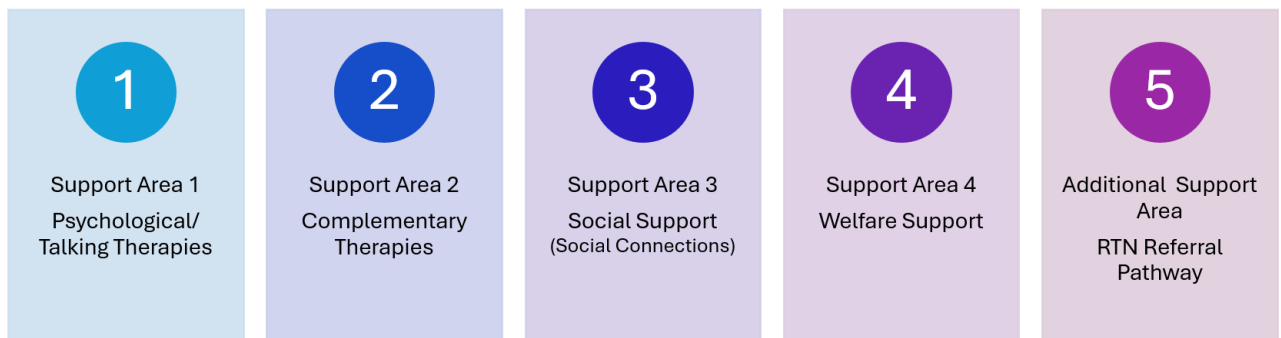
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<sup>1</sup> Programme value in 2024/25 - £7.4m. Programme value in 2025/26 - £7.7m.

<sup>2</sup> Organisations will be required to specify the postcode area or areas where your proposed project will be delivered.

### 3. What areas of support can organisations apply to deliver?

The Victims Support Programme welcomes applications for projects to deliver the following areas of support:



All organisations applying to deliver any or all these areas of support must adhere to the following:

- the CVS [Standards for Services Provided to Victims and Survivors](#) and [CVS Clinical Governance Standards](#)
- the [VSS Clinical Governance Framework](#); and
- the [VSS Guidance Note on Corporate Governance](#)

The Commission for Victims and Survivors (CVS) updated its standards for services provided to victims and survivors in June 2025.

Compliance with the CVS Standards and both frameworks will be reviewed as part of pre-contract checks for successful applicants before a Letter of Offer is issued.

### 4. What can the Victims Support Programme fund?

The Victims Support Programme can fund all the direct project costs and make a reasonable contribution towards the in-direct staff costs and overheads of running your organisation. For further information on what can and cannot be funded, see [Annex A: What the Victims Support Programme can and cannot fund](#).

## 5. Who can apply?

Any legally constituted charitable organisation located in NI is eligible to apply to the Victims Support Programme provided they can demonstrate at least **5 years' experience** in the delivery of health and wellbeing support and services to victims and survivors of the Troubles/conflict. This can be demonstrated in two ways:

1. That they are an organisation in receipt of funding through a VSS Victims Support Programme Letter of Offer in 2025/26;<sup>3</sup>

or

2. Within the application form, demonstrate and evidence at least **5 years' experience** in the delivery of health and wellbeing support and services to victims and survivors of the Troubles/conflict<sup>4</sup>.

## 6. Who cannot apply

Applications from the following list cannot be accepted for project funding from the Victims Support Programme.

- Individuals
- Local Authorities
- Statutory bodies for activities which fall within their statutory remit

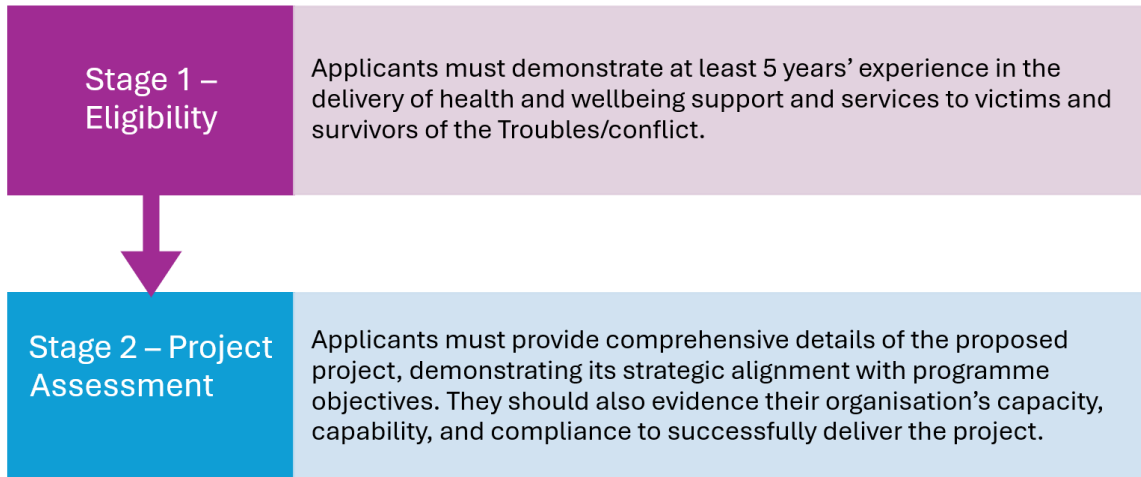
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<sup>3</sup> Organisations currently in receipt of funding from VSS automatically demonstrate 5-years' experience of delivering health and wellbeing support to victims and survivors. All applicants will be subject to the same assessment process regardless of which eligibility criteria they meet.

<sup>4</sup> As defined within [The Victims and Survivors \(Northern Ireland\) Order 2006](#).

## 7. The application process

The application process has **two stages**:



**Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria at Stage 1 will not proceed to Stage 2 for further assessment. Applicants will be informed of the outcome of the eligibility stage in November 2025.**

Unsuccessful applicants will have the option to appeal this decision and should refer to **[Annex B: Appeal of application outcome decisions](#)**.

### How to apply

Applicants are required to **complete and submit the following five documents**:

1. Victims Support Programme 2026-2028 **Application Form** (word document)
2. Application Form Appendix 1 – Management Committee/Trustee Board membership details
3. Application Form Appendix 2 – Other sources of income
4. Application Form Appendix 3 – Organisational Chart
5. Victims Support Programme 2026-2028 **Delivery Plan and Budget Workbook** (excel document).

Please email the five required documents to: **[communitypartnership@vssni.org](mailto:communitypartnership@vssni.org)**  
The deadline for applications is **Thursday, 6 November 2025 at 12:00 noon**.

Information to support decision making should be **clearly demonstrated** within the application form (word document).

**Please note the following in respect of submitting your application:**

- You **must** submit all **application documents electronically**.
- Hard copies **cannot** be accepted.
- If you require technical support to **submit this application electronically**, please contact VSS on 028 9027 9100.
- We recommend that **you request a read receipt** to ensure that that your email has been received by VSS.
- Please contact us to confirm receipt if you do not receive an email confirmation from VSS within 24 hours of submission.
- **Applications received after 12 noon Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2025 will not be accepted.**

## **8. Support Available**

### **Information sessions**

All applicants are encouraged to attend an information session. These sessions will be held at the following locations from 10.30am – 12.30pm on the following dates:

**Belfast: Monday 8th September at NICVA - 61 Duncairn Gardens, Belfast BT15 2GB**

**Cookstown: Wednesday 10th September at the Glenavon Hotel - 52 Drum Rd, Cookstown BT80 8QS**

**L/Derry: Friday 12th September at the Everglades Hotel- Prehen Rd, Londonderry BT47 2NH**

During the sessions, VSS will present a comprehensive overview of the Victims Support Programme and explain the assessment process. To register for the information session please contact us at the following email address - [communitypartnership@vssni.org](mailto:communitypartnership@vssni.org)

## Written queries

VSS will accept written queries on the application process via email to the following address - [communitypartnership@vssni.org](mailto:communitypartnership@vssni.org)

We will publish responses to all queries received on the VSS website. This will ensure that all applicants are kept informed and will provide clarity on frequently asked questions.

## Excel workbook technical support

In addition, VSS staff will be available to provide **technical support** for queries on the completion of the Delivery Plan and Budget Workbook (excel). Support will be provided **only** with respect to excel technical queries. VSS staff cannot discuss or offer views on the proposed project approach/content ahead of the closing date.

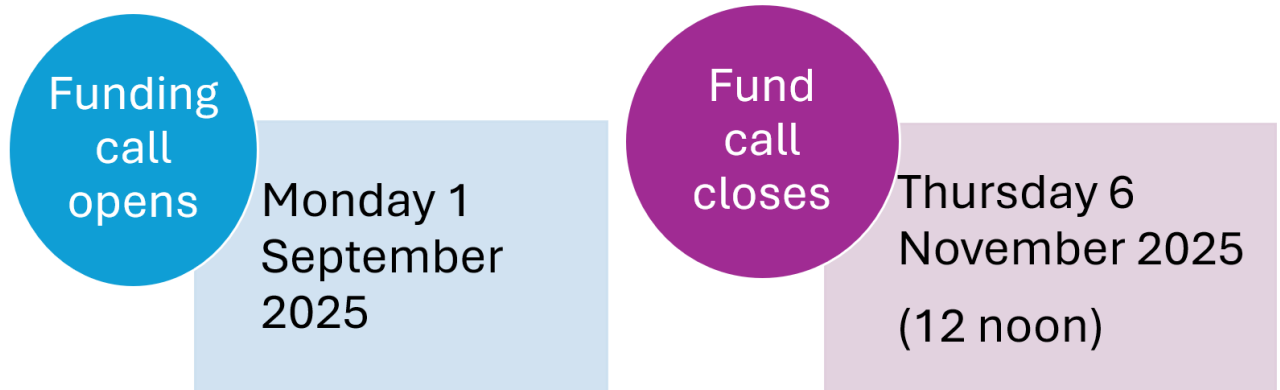
To book a technical support appointment, please contact us at the following email address - [communitypartnership@vssni.org](mailto:communitypartnership@vssni.org)

Technical Support (on the excel workbook) will be available until **12 noon Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2025**.

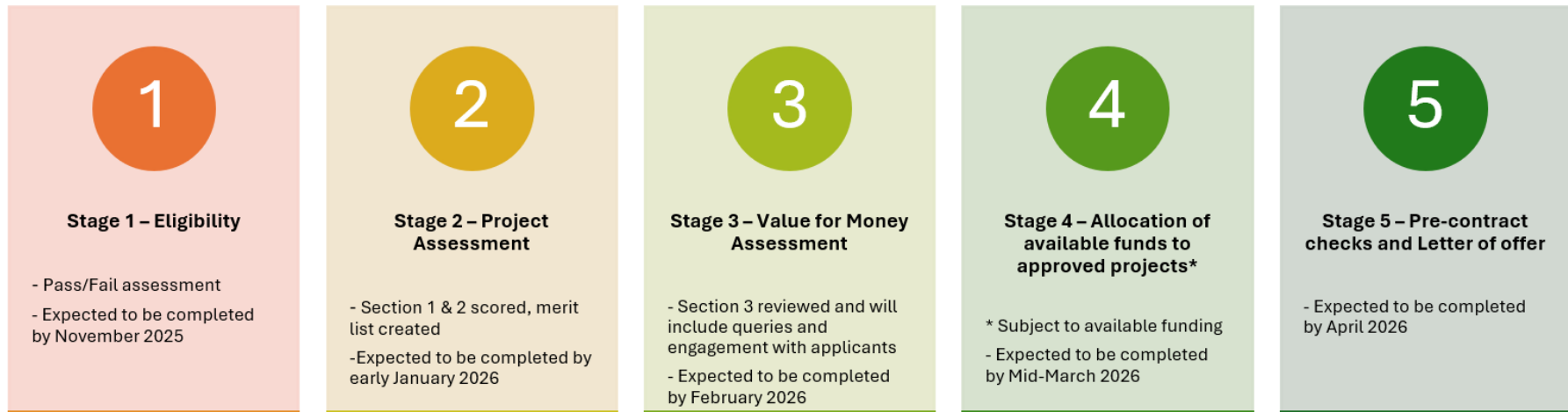
Technical support on the excel workbook **cannot** be provided after this date.

VSS staff can provide support to applicants with the electronic submission of their application forms up to the closing date.

## 9. When will the call open and close?



## 10. Overview of the Assessment Process



### **Key information for applicants on the assessment process:**

- Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria at Stage 1 **will not** proceed to Stage 2 for further assessment. It is anticipated that applicants will be informed of the outcome in November 2025.
- Applications that do not meet the minimum scoring threshold (see section 11 below), **will not** proceed to Stage 3 for further assessment. It is anticipated that applicants will be informed of the outcome in in January 2026.
- Organisations whose applications are unsuccessful at stage 1 or stage 2 have the **right to appeal**. Please see section 12 for further information on appeals.
- At **Stage 3 – Value for Money Assessment**, the **VSS multi-disciplinary team** will review each application to determine if it offers good value for money. During this stage:
  - The team **may contact your organisation** with follow-up questions.
  - These questions could be:
    - **written**, asking for more details or documents,
    - or involve an **in-person or online meeting**.

It is essential that **key contacts** in your organisation are **available and responsive** during this time to avoid delays. Organisations will be given strict deadlines for responding to queries and failure to meet these deadlines may impact on your project allocation.

- It should be noted that **approval of a bid will not guarantee allocation of funding** in a situation where the value of approved bids on the merit list exceeds the available funding.

### **Key factors that VSS will consider as part of the assessment process:**

- VSS will ensure that resources are allocated against identified and evidenced needs in a transparent, fair, and effective way.
- VSS will also ensure that interventions are equitably targeted as per the identified and evidenced needs and priorities. We will take account of geography, and accessibility for victims and survivors from across the community, combined with proposed approaches to meet the needs identified within each locality.

- Applicants should be aware that VSS reserves the right to fund only specific strands, parts or activity levels within proposals that are most appropriate for the priorities agreed and resources available. Under such circumstances, VSS will engage with organisations to explain and agree the approach/allocation.
- VSS Board retains **final discretion** on all allocations of funding.

## 11. Scoring Process and Resource allocation recommendations

The table below outlines the scoring process that will be applied in the assessment of each application for **sections 1 and 2**. These scores will be used to create a **merit list**.

**Section 3** of the application form will undergo a separate value for money assessment. This will be conducted by a multi-disciplinary assessment team at VSS. Where necessary, the team will engage with the applicant organisation to clarify or further explore the information provided. The aim of this assessment is to determine whether the proposed delivery plan - specifically its volume, range, and cost - is reasonable, acceptable and affordable.

The multi-disciplinary team will collaborate with the applicant to refine the proposal into a plan that is both deliverable and represents value for money.

Allocation of the Victims Support Programme's available funds will be made in line with the merit list. However, as outlined above, we will also take into account within allocation decisions the geographic distribution and the accessibility of services for victims and survivors across the community.

As a result, it may be necessary to amend delivery plans and associated budgets.

***It should be noted that approval of a bid will not guarantee allocation of funding in a situation where the value of approved bids on the merit list exceeds the available funding.***

## Scoring Table

Section	Marks	Weighting	Max Available score
<b>Section 1: Strategic Alignment</b>			
Section 1.1: About your organisation - vision, mission and values	0-10	(x1)	10
Section 1.2: Overview of your project	0-10	(X2)	20
Section 1.3: Project delivery – client journey	0-10	(x4)	40
Section 1.4: Project delivery – partnerships and collaboration	0-10	(x4)	40
<b>Section 2: Organisational capacity, capability and compliance</b>			
Section 2.1: Your Management Committee/Board of Trustees	0-10	(x2)	20
Section 2.2: Your other income	Not scored		
Section 2.3: Your staff	0-10	(x2)	20
Section 2.4: Your organisational costs	0-10	(x2)	20
Section 2.5: Project monitoring & evaluation	0-10	(x2)	20
Section 2.6: Project exit planning	0-10	(x1)	10
<b>Total Marks available</b>			<b>200</b>

### Notes to scoring:

1. The minimum mark required for each question is 6/10.

## 12. Appeals

Unsuccessful applicants who wish to appeal the outcome of the assessment decision may do so. The appeals process is set out in [Annex B: Appeal of Application Outcome Decisions](#).

### Please note:

The appeals procedure allows applicants to appeal a decision on either the eligibility assessment of their application or the scoring assessment of their application, specifically a decision that it does not meet the minimum threshold score of 6/10, meaning the application is unsuccessful. However, **it does not apply to decisions regarding the amount of funding allocated to successful applicants** — appeals concerning the level of funding awarded will not be considered.