

# Meals on Wheels UK – Provider Resource



*Developed by the Meals on Wheels UK project, University of Bristol*

## Finding funding for Meals on Wheels services: where to start

### Why this matters

Many Meals on Wheels providers operate under significant financial pressure, with limited capacity to identify and apply for funding opportunities.

At the same time, a range of funding sources exist that may be relevant to services supporting:

- older people
- community wellbeing
- health and prevention
- social care and inclusion

This guide provides a simple starting point to help providers identify potential sources of funding.

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### Types of funding to consider

Funding opportunities for Meals on Wheels services often fall into the following categories:

#### 1. Charitable trusts and foundations

Many trusts fund work supporting older people, health, and community services.

Examples include:

- [AB Charitable Trust](#) (supports work promoting dignity and inclusion)
  - [Allen Lane Foundation](#) (funds projects supporting older people and disadvantaged groups)
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#### 2. Community and local funding

Some funds are region-specific and support local community services.

These may include:

- local authority funds
  - regional trusts
  - community or environmental funds
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#### 3. Social enterprise and innovation funding

Some programmes support new ideas, service development, or scaling activity.

Examples include:

- [UnLtd](#) (supports social entrepreneurs at different stages)
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#### **4. National and large-scale funding programmes**

Larger funders may support research, innovation, or service development linked to policy priorities.

Examples include:

- [The National Lottery Community Fund](#) (supports community-based projects addressing social need)
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#### **Getting started**

Providers may wish to:

- identify funders aligned with their service (e.g. older people, health, community support)
  - start with smaller grants before applying for larger funding
  - build partnerships where appropriate (e.g. with local authorities or charities)
  - use existing evidence (including service impact) to strengthen applications
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#### **A note on capacity**

We recognise that applying for funding can be time-consuming.

Providers may wish to:

- focus on opportunities that are a strong fit
  - reuse application content where appropriate
  - collaborate with partners where possible
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#### **Learning from others**

Many providers have experience of:

- applying for funding
- securing grants or contracts
- working with commissioners or partners

We encourage providers to share:

- funding opportunities they have found useful

- tips for preparing applications
- examples of successful approaches

## **Final note**

Funding opportunities change regularly, and eligibility criteria vary.

This guide is intended as a starting point rather than a comprehensive list.

## **Help us improve this resource**

This guide has been developed to support Meals on Wheels providers in navigating funding opportunities.

We recognise that many providers already have valuable experience in securing funding and developing sustainable services.

We would really value your input to help ensure this resource reflects what works in practice.

If you have experience in securing funding, we would be very interested to hear from you.

You might wish to share:

- funding sources you have found useful
- tips or approaches that have helped your applications succeed
- challenges you've encountered
- examples of funding that has supported your service

We are particularly interested in practical insights that could help other providers.

Please share your ideas via our [WhatsApp Community](#).

Your input will help develop a resource shaped by providers across the sector.