



**Funded by
UK Government**



UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND DUNDEE
Supporting Local Business
SME Support and/or Upskilling

Invitation to bid opens	10:00 on Thursday 15 May 2025
Invitation to bid closes	12:00 on Friday 13 June 2025
Minimum application level	£20,000
Maximum application level	£100,000
Match Funding	No specific level is required but projects with an element of in-kind or revenue match funding is preferred.
Timing	Projects must be completed by 31 March 2026
Application process	<p>Apply via the online portal from https://www.dundee.gov.uk/service-area/city-development/planning-and-economic-development/the-uk-shared-prosperity-fund-ukspf</p> <p>Applications submitted late or via any other method will not be accepted. Please ensure you read the full guidance before submitting your application.</p>

Background to the UKSPF in Dundee

Introduction

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is the UK Government's programme of investment in local areas, aimed at delivering on local priorities, addressing key challenges and opportunities. Local authorities across the UK are the lead delivery partners for this investment, who allocate funding across the city.

The Government has provided local authorities across the UK with additional funding for Year 4 of the programme to be delivered in 2025/26. The UK Government is currently assessing options for the future delivery of the regional funding.

The 2025/26 UKSPF Programme identified several thematic priorities/missions including, supporting local business. This includes the delivery of advice and support to businesses, enterprise culture and start up support and investment in business sites and premises.

An overview of the UKSPF Programme can be found on the UK Government [website](#).

The need for specific local business support

Supporting local SMEs is a key priority for UKSPF. The funding recognises the importance of SMEs in the growing a sustainable economy, creating local jobs. UKSPF Dundee funding is aimed at addressing the opportunities and challenges being experienced by the local business community, as set out below.

- The [Tay Cities Regional Economic Strategy 2019-2039](#) sets out the economic performance of Tayside, along with the vision and targets for the region in respect to business growth and entrepreneurship. The overarching ambition is to increase the number of businesses and to create more, better-paid jobs across the Tay Cities Region in order to improve access to opportunity and increase the distribution of wealth and wellbeing within the area. Key aims are to align skills development with opportunities within the key growth sectors, and enhance the support for business start-ups, small business growth, and exporting potential.
- The Scottish Government's [Businesses in Scotland 2023](#) report shows that between March 2022 and March 2023, the estimated number of businesses decreased by 5.6%.
- [In 2022](#) the business death rate (11.8%) was higher than the business birth rate (11.5%). This is the first time this has happened since 2010.
- [According to the ONS](#), only 37.5% of new businesses in Dundee are still operating five years after starting, compared to the Scottish average of 40.5%.
- [As of the second quarter of 2023](#) exports from Scotland amounted to almost £27 billion, while imports amounted to £32.83 billion, resulting in a trade deficit of £5.74 billion.
- The [New Startup Index](#) shows that in 2023 40,700 new businesses were created in Scotland, an increase of 12% from the previous year.
- The [FSB index Q3 2023](#) found that access to appropriately skilled staff is a barrier to growth for 22% of small businesses. In the information and communication sector, it is 38.3%.
- According to a [regional skills analysis](#) by Skills Development Scotland, 66% of Scottish employers anticipate the need to upskill their employees. The skills identified for upskilling are complex analytical skills (45%), digital skills (49%) and operational skills (58%).
- The same analysis shows that in terms of the future demand for skills in the long-term (2026-2033) Dundee will require an additional 25,700 people in its workforce, with 61% of these having a qualification SCQF 7 or above.
- Figures from [ONS](#) suggest that businesses that export, while only being 3% of the business base in Scotland, account for 60% of UK annual productivity growth and are, on average, 70% more productive than businesses that don't export.
- The UK Government's 2021 [Export Strategy: Made in the UK, Sold to the World](#), commits to encouraging and inspiring businesses that can export but have not started or are just beginning their exporting journey. It also aims to support businesses by providing information, advice and practical assistance on exporting from the public or private sector, and their peers.

Intervention Specific Guidance

Aim of intervention

This challenge fund is focused on **SME upskilling and business growth** (*UKSPF Theme – Support for Business, Sub-Theme – Advice and Support to business*).

To address this key priority Dundee is looking to deliver advice and support to businesses (with the focus on SMEs) in the city. This could include sectoral support for key growth sectors (life sciences, digital & creative industries, energy); support for staff training to address key skill shortages within company workforces, support SMEs in the transition to net zero

This call therefore invites applications from potential providers who can deliver support to local businesses and skills development programmes for SMEs in Dundee, tailored towards local business needs and economic challenges and opportunities. Applicants must demonstrate in-depth knowledge

of the local business ecosystem and must have existing contacts and relationships among the local business community.

Who can apply?

Any legally constituted organisation/body can apply as long as 100% of the activity takes place within Dundee City Council's boundaries and supports organisations/individuals/companies located in Dundee. Applicant organisations must have been operational for a minimum of 18 months. Priority will be given to projects that are delivered by organisations with significant knowledge of the local economy and experience of delivering expert business support to SMEs.

Dundee City Council will undertake due diligence on all applicants.

Eligible costs

Costs may include events; training; expert help; business planning; programmes of support for businesses; professional fees; staff costs; consultants costs, and other justifiable expenditure relevant to delivering the project.

Procurement Requirements

All projects will be required to align to UK Government [UKSPF procurement regulations](#) for the use of public funding, if they are looking to buy in services/invest in materials etc. At a minimum this is:

Value of contract	Minimum Procedure
£0 - £2,499	Direct award
£2,500-£24,999	3 written quotes or prices sought from relevant suppliers of goods, works and / or services. Justification that a reasonable decision has been made on the basis of the quotes/prices.
Over £25,000	Formal tender process

For organisations who are recognised as contracting authorities (local authorities and bodies governed by public law) within the meaning of the procurement regulations, Dundee City Council will ensure that the applicant complies, as necessary, with the procurement regulations when procuring goods and services in connection with the project activities.

The following costs should not be included in UKSPF interventions:

- Paid for lobbying, entertaining, petitioning or challenging decisions, which means using the Fund to lobby (via an external firm or in-house staff) to undertake activities intended to influence or attempt to influence Parliament, government or political activity including the receipt of UKSPF funding; or attempting to influence legislative or regulatory action
- Payments for activities of a party political or exclusively religious nature
- VAT reclaimable from HMRC
- Gifts, or payments for gifts or donations
- Statutory fines, criminal fines or penalties
- Payments for works or activities which the lead local authority, project deliverer, end beneficiary, or any member of their partnership has a statutory duty to undertake, or that are fully funded by other sources
- Contingencies and contingent liabilities
- Dividends

- Bad debts, costs resulting from the deferral of payments to creditors, or winding up a Company
- Expenses in respect of litigation, unfair dismissal or other compensation
- Costs incurred by individuals in setting up and contributing towards private pension schemes

Process for Awarding Funds

All projects which meet the basic criteria for this Challenge Fund will be taken before an Investment Panel of three assessors including at least one representative from Dundee City Council as the Lead Local Authority and one representative from the relevant sector with knowledge of the type of projects that would achieve the best outcomes in Dundee. These panels will assess the applications and make recommendations on which projects should receive funding.

If the award is a subsidy under the Subsidy Control Act 2022, then we may seek further information from you in order that we can legally award the grant.

How will funds be distributed?

Each successful project will be required to sign a grant offer letter with Dundee City Council outlining the proposed milestones for the project, reporting requirements and how the grant will be paid. All funding must be spent by March 31st 2026, and claimed by 14th April 2026.

Section 2 – How to complete the online application

Please answer all questions directly in the online application form. When completing the application please assume that the Assessment Panel who will be scoring bids has no prior knowledge of your organisation or proposal therefore outline as clearly as possible the need for the project, why your organisation is best placed to deliver the project, the proposed outcomes/outputs and how your project will deliver the aims and objectives of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and local, regional and/or national strategies.

Initial Questions

This section will act as a gateway to ensure your project meets the required criteria and is therefore eligible to apply for funds from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Dundee. There are two Yes/No questions in this section. Applicants must be able to answer Yes to both, or their project will not be eligible for UKSPF Dundee funding.

Applicant Information

Applicants should complete this section with as much information as possible. When identifying a main contact person please consider who would be the most appropriate person to receive correspondence regarding the UK Shared Prosperity Fund within your organisation.

Project Summary

In this section, include the project title and start and end dates. Confirm which geographical location(s) your project will operate in by stating which ward(s) that will be. Multiple selections are allowed here.

There is also a short section (approx. 200 words) to provide a high-level summary of your project. This information may be used to promote your project and to report back to the UK Government on the projects that are being funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in Dundee. Please also tell us what your project costs will be, along with how much you are requesting from UKSPF Dundee.

Project Information

This section is divided into several different questions and is where you have an opportunity to explain the rationale behind your project, what it will deliver and what it will achieve because of the funding. This is the section that will be scored by the Investment Panel so specific guidance for each question is provided below. **Please try and answer concisely, ensuring that the relevant points are covered, while keeping within the suggested word count.**

What will your project deliver? What will you do with the funds? (600 words)

Please state exactly what you aim to deliver with your project. Be specific, what activities will you deliver? Will you recruit staff to deliver the activities described? The more information you provide, the more accurately we will be able to assess your application. Explain your activities, deliverables and timeline. It should be concise and clear and refer specifically to the scope of your project and what the funding will be spent on. You will have the opportunity to explain the need and rationale of your project in follow-up questions.

What is the need for your project and how have you identified it? Please provide evidence of the need (600 words)

In this question we want to understand why your project is needed. A strong application will support this with qualitative and/or quantitative data to demonstrate the need and may be based on evidence provided through community engagement or direct interaction with the relevant client or user group. We also want to know how your project will fill existing gaps within service provision in the city and what steps you will take to ensure that your project is not duplicating existing activity or funding.

How will you identify businesses to be supported and avoid duplication of existing services? (600 words)

Explain how you will identify and engage with local SMEs to enable them to access the support you will be offering e.g. marketing strategy, and knowledge of the business sector. Provide evidence of how the proposed approach will avoid duplicating existing service provision.

What previous experience of delivering support to businesses or upskilling businesses does your organisation have? Please provide examples of delivery models. (600 words)

Please describe your organisational experience of delivery of similar scale projects and grants, related to the intervention that you are applying too. Be specific, what have you delivered, what were the budgets available to you and how successful were you in achieving your aims and objectives.

Please also describe your experience of submitting financial claims and providing timely monitoring reports in line with funders' timescales and guidance. Please also provide any additional information that will help us to understand your ability to deliver including, but not limited to:

- Links with the local business community/previous engagement with the relevant user group
- Skills knowledge and expertise of your project delivery team
- Assets and resources that you have available including space, buildings, equipment etc.

How will your proposal support the growth and/or upskilling of the SME base in the city and what outputs and outcomes are anticipated as a result of this engagement? (600 words)

The outputs and outcomes for each intervention can be found in the [UKSPF Indicators 25-26 .xlsx](#) document. Answer this question by providing some details around the expected outputs and outcomes that you anticipate your project will achieve. Consider the benefits for the SMEs involved in the project, and the positive impact it will have on the wider local economy.

If your project is providing support to a specific sector, please provide evidence of experience you have of engaging with this sector. (600 words)

Explain how your project fits with local, regional and national strategies (600 words)

Strong applications will explain how the project and activities to be delivered fit within the UK Shared Prosperity Fund objectives as well as relevant local, regional and national plans including, the Dundee City Plan and the Regional Economic Strategy. Name the strategy, indicate which priorities your project addresses and how your project will deliver the outcomes of the strategy.

Plans to consider include:

- [Dundee City Council City Plan 2022-2032](#)
- [Tay Cities Regional Economic Strategy](#)
- [Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)
- [UK Shared Prosperity Fund – Supporting Local Business theme](#)
- [Scotland's Vision for Trade \(www.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Scotland: A Trading Nation](#)
- [Scotland's National Innovation Strategy 2023 to 2033](#)

Please use this space to provide any further information you feel is relevant to your application or to continue responses to previous questions where you have reached the word limit. (600 words)

Feel free to use this box to provide additional information which may be relevant to your application and was not covered by the previous questions.

Provide information on your organisation/group's fair work practices (300 words)

As Dundee City Council is committed to supporting the Fair Work Agenda, please provide some details about your organisation or groups fair work practices. This could include, being a Living Wage Employer, providing adequate job security for employees or providing an inclusive and diverse environment for people to work in.

Checklist

In order to complete your application, you must confirm that you have:

- Read and understood the UKSPF Guidance
- Completed the application supplementary information by selecting relevant outputs/outcomes
- Completed the application supplementary information by providing details on budget and costs
- Completed all the questions in the application form

Data protection

This section contains a link to the [UKSPF Privacy Statement](#) which explains what we do with the personal data you provide.

Declaration

Please read the declaration and tick the box to accept the conditions and acknowledge that you have read and agree to the Council's [UKSPF Privacy Statement](#) as well as confirming that you have the authority within your group or organisation to submit this application.

Once you submit your application, you can print a copy of your answers for your own records. Once you press 'submit' you will receive a message confirming your application has been received. Click on the three dots on the top right hand of the page and you will have the option to print the document or save it as a PDF.

Section 3 - How to fill out the Application Supplementary Information

Outputs & Targets

You will be required to submit details of your project's outputs and targets in the separate Excel sheet. This form allows you to add in the pre-determined outputs and outcomes your project will achieve. Select the output/outcome, add the target figure and add the baseline. A project baseline is the starting point for your project. For example, if it is a brand new project the baseline target figure will be zero. You can also add your own additional outputs and outcomes in the 'free text box' if relevant.

Applicants should feel free to specify any other outputs and outcomes that they think are appropriate and will be delivered by the project, but the application will be assessed based on value for money in terms of the specific outputs and outcomes.

Applicants are encouraged to be as realistic as possible, targets that are deemed unattainable will not be looked on favourably as the targets specified here will form the basis of the monitoring and evaluation of your project. Similarly, projects deemed unambitious will likely not score highly with the investment panel. We encourage applicants to give serious consideration to this section and identify appropriate targets.

Outputs:

- OP10 – Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support

Outcomes:

- OC8 – Jobs created as a result of support
- OC9 – Jobs safeguarded as a result of support
- OC11 – Number of enterprises adopting new or improved products or services
- OC12 – Number of enterprises adopting new to the firm technologies or processes
- OC13 – Number of enterprises engaged in new markets

Applicants must also provide a baseline figure in order that we can measure progress in achieving the outcomes and outputs. Note that there is space to offer additional outputs and outcomes pertinent to your project that support SME growth.

Budget & Costs

You will be required to submit details of your project's budget in the budget tab of the Excel document. Applicants must specify the amount that they are requesting from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund as well as how much match funding they have available from other sources (if required and bearing in mind match funding may have a positive impact on value for money). Applicants must also specify what the other sources are, i.e. own funds or other funding pots (name the funder).

Applicants are asked to provide a cost breakdown showing what the funding will be spent-on, i.e. staff, materials, venue hire etc. Please be as accurate as possible when providing this information.

If your organisation is providing in-kind funding to the project, there is a section that will allow you to provide further details of what that will entail. This may be particularly useful for smaller organisations who are unable to provide direct match-funding for the project.

Subsidy Control

As the Lead Authority in administering Dundee's allocation of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Dundee City Council has several obligations under the UK's Subsidy Control Act legislation. To that end, applicants are asked to answer Yes or No to a question on whether they have received any state funding within the last three financial years. This is any funding that has come from any local, regional or national public body including the European Union.

Any applicant answering Yes to this will be required to provide further information on the date, amount and source of the funding. If multiple awards were received, then multiple records should be provided. This information will be assessed by officers at Dundee City Council and if your application is deemed to constitute a potential subsidy, they will contact you to request further information.

Please note that this will not be held against your application and will not be considered positively or negatively in scoring your application. It is a requirement in line with Dundee City Council's obligations under the UK Subsidy Control Act and applicants are asked to provide the information requested as accurately as possible.

If information comes to light later that was not presented at this stage, applicants may be found to be in breach of the funding conditions and appropriate action will be taken at that stage, including exclusion from the challenge fund process, withdrawal of any funding offer or clawback of any funding allocated.

There are a small number of legal routes to award a subsidy, including Minimal Financial Assistance or by undertaking a [subsidy control principles assessment](#). If an organisation has had more than £315,000 of public funding in the last three financial years, then the grant cannot be awarded under Minimal Financial Assistance (if the grant is considered a subsidy) and an alternative route will need to be identified. This may mean it takes longer to prepare the grant offer letter as we identify an appropriate route for delivery. If it is necessary to offer the grant as a subsidy we may contact you for further information.

Once you have submitted your application via the online portal, send the completed Application Supplementary information to externalfunding@dundeecity.gov.uk

Further Information

[UK Shared Prosperity Fund: overview \(1\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[UK Shared Prosperity Fund: outputs and outcomes definitions \(2\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[UK Shared Prosperity Fund: reporting and performance management \(3\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[UK Shared Prosperity Fund: monitoring and evaluation \(4\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[UK Shared Prosperity Fund: assurance and risk \(5\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[UK Shared Prosperity Fund: branding and publicity \(6\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[UK Shared Prosperity Fund: subsidy control \(7\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[UK Shared Prosperity Fund: procurement \(8\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[UK Shared Prosperity Fund: equalities \(9\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[UK Subsidy Control Statutory Guidance](#)