**LNER Customer & Community Investment Fund Guidance Form**

**Pre application**

* If you have an application you would like to submit, but you are not certain that it meets the Customer and Community Investment Fund (CCIF) criteria, please visit [www.lner.co.uk/CCIF](http://www.lner.co.uk/CCIF) on the LNER website, or if you still have questions email CCIF@lner.co.uk.
* Only applications submitted via the online application form, will be accepted. This is, accessible via the LNER website, please visit [www.lner.co.uk/CCIF](http://www.lner.co.uk/CCIF). Any applications submitted using any other format **will not be accepted.**
* Please ensure you meet the CCIF criteria to apply for funding before you complete the application form. For details on what we will and will not support, please see the LNER Charitable Giving Policy **(add link)**.
* Our preference would be to use the fund to support small and medium charities to deliver projects that align with the four themes the fund supports. Which are Mental Health, Education and Employability Skills, Diversity and Inclusion and Environmental Sustainability.
	+ We define a large charity as a voluntary or community organisation with an annual income of more than £1 million per annum.

**Completing the Application**

* Please **click here** to access an application template, that includes questions to consider when completing each section within application.
* Once you start completing the CCIF application form, please do not leave the page as you will lose any information that has been added.
* Once completed and the application has been submitted, you will receive a confirmation message on the screen. To advise the application has been received. **You will not receive and email confirmation.**
* A letter count applies to the following areas
	+ Brief Project Summary – 1000 letters
	+ Please outline how the scheme will address the theme – 3000 letters
	+ Project Scope – 6000 letters
	+ Org aims and activities - 3000 letters

**Who can apply**
We welcome applications from registered charities, community groups and other types of not-for-profit organisations including community rail partnerships, business partnerships, town councils, parish councils and schools. However, with regards to schools, we can only fund activity which is extracurricular and outside the usual statutory remit.

**Type of Projects**

The fund is expected to support a wide range of proposals that will bring improvements and benefits where there is an identified social need. We are particularly interested in projects that would support the LNER community investment strategy, which focuses on mental health, education and employability, diversity and inclusion and environment and sustainability.

For information on types of projects previously supported please visit [www.lner.co.uk/CCIF](http://www.lner.co.uk/CCIF).

**Themes**

The key themes the fund supports are those areas with a demonstrable link to our business, vision, and values, where we believe we can achieve the greatest impact. The themes are:

* **Mental health** – Creating a culture of positive mental health, bringing people and communities together and taking positive action to preventing suicide.
* **Education and employability skills** – A focus on building skills, promoting employability and education amongst marginalised groups by investing in the skills requirements of now and in the future.
* **Diversity and inclusion** – Supporting diverse and inclusive community projects, creating opportunities for learning and the social mobility of vulnerable groups.
* **Environmental Sustainability** –By providing support to environmental projects and encouraging sustainable mobility, for our customers and communities. There are three areas we would like CCIF applications to focus on, which are outlined below. Examples have been included, but is you have any questions please contact CCIF@lner.co.uk.
* Biodiversity – projects on rewilding areas, creating new or extending existing wildlife corridors and regeneration of urban spaces
* Sustainable Travel – projects that encourage communities to travel more to sustainably, to and from LNER trains stations.
* Waste Reduction and the Circular Economy – would be open to projects that would help LNER reduce or would convert waste into a reusable asset.

**Total cost of project. Inc a breakdown of costs.**

The minimum amount that can be requested is £1000 and the maximum amount is £50,000. For all requests, the following will be required.

* High-level Breakdown of project costs
	+ Which needs to set out the total cost of the project, even if you are not applying to LNER CCIF for the full amount. It should set out, how the costs have been reached.
	+ It will need to show how the CCIF amount sits within the project costs, and which parts of the project this funding will deliver / support.

This can either be included in the application or as and additional document.

**Confirmed match funding and source of match funding.**

Although funding is available for 100% of project costs, groups should be aware that the panel will consider applicants that are offering some contribution to the project costs. This could be financially through their own fundraising efforts or ‘in kind’ through the support of volunteers getting involved and giving their time.

*We would prefer to be the sole funder, or one of two funders for an application. We would not want to fund an application where we are one of several funders.*

**Timescales**

A high-level breakdown month by month of the key activities and timescales over the 12 months, should be include in this section.

We hope to confirm project funding by late February / early March, to enable applicants to be ready to start their proposal. The funding **must** be spent or fully committed by 31st March 2025.

**Additional information**

* For funding requests between £10,000 and £50,000 please advise what funding has secured by the charity in the last 2 years. How this has been spent and what has been delivered.
* The scheme and charity do not need to be located within the immediate proximity of an LNER station; instead, the fund is open to those located within 10 – 15 miles of the LNER route, in England and Scotland. Please see the [LNER route map](https://www.lner.co.uk/our-destinations/) for further details.
* CCI funding, cannot be used to fill gaps in budgets for the core costs of a charity, salaries, or general running costs of the charity.
* Staff Costs will be considered, but they must relate to the application submitted. And cannot be for core costs for a charity, such as salaries, general running costs etc. These costs should not equal more than 40% of the overall funding amount requested.
* If you want to involve LNER in a project i.e., staff training, access to stations etc. You will need to contact the Community Investment Manager to discuss if this is feasible via CCIF@lner.co.uk.
* We would prefer not to fund capital projects. We would define a capital project as a project to construct either new facilities or make significant, long-term renewal improvements to existing facilities.

**Additional documents**

Only one additional document can be uploaded with the application. This must include the high-level budget breakdown of project costs, and other information if appropriate.

Uploaded document should be limited to either two worksheets for Excel, or two pages for Word and a PDF document. If any additional worksheets or pages are included, they will not be considered as part of the application.

**Assessment and Award**

All eligible applications will be assessed. We may contact you to obtain further information, and this may be over the telephone or via email.

Our decisions are final and cannot be changed, although we will provide feedback if requested.