

## **Voluntary Sector Development Fund (VSDF) key facts**

### **What is VSDF for?**

- VSDF supports key groups of social service workers, as specified in the criteria, that require to meet the qualification requirements linked to SSSC required registration deadlines.
- The grant is provided to help staff achieve the qualifications required for their SSSC registration. Staff do not need to be registered with SSSC in order to be eligible for VSDF but must be registered with SSSC within six months of their employer accepting the VSDF award which will support their qualification achievement.
- Employees for which VSDF is sought can be full or part time but must be in a category of job that requires them to register with SSSC. It is not available for volunteer workers or modern apprentices.
- VSDF is a contribution, in part, to the training costs for specific individuals identified in the grant application – grants cannot be used for any other purpose or for other individuals unless there is a good reason and unless prior agreement from SSSC is obtained.
- Funding for any one organisation is capped at a maximum of £24,000.
- For 2022-23 the groups of workers that will be considered for VSDF support are:
  - support workers in housing support services
  - support workers in care at home services.
- Funding is available for SVQ Social Services and Healthcare at SCQF level 6 and 7. Given the increasing complexity of roles and changing models of care delivery the SSSC and Scottish Government would encourage level 7 applications.

## Who can apply?

- VSDF is available to voluntary sector social service providers who are seeking to provide qualifications over the next 24 months, to the groups of workers above.
- VSDF **cannot** be provided for individual staff that have already started their qualification **before 1 January 2023**.
- Organisations must be a registered charity and must be registered with the Care Inspectorate as a service provider. Staff who you apply for VSDF funding must be working in a registered service.
- Organisations do not need to have matched funding in place in order to secure VSDF. Organisations can get VSDF if they have other training resources and applicants are asked to provide details of those other funding sources in the application form.
- **VSDF funding cannot be used to support employees undertaking a modern apprenticeship route.**

## How long is the grant for?

Successful organisations will be notified about grant awards by late 2022.

Grant payments will be made in full to the successful service provider organisations and must be used within 24 months from the grant award date.

## What are the terms of the grant?

- Qualifications must be completed within 24 months of the grant being awarded. If the grant is not used because of significant delays in starting the qualification, the SSSC will ask for any unspent grant to be returned. Account will be taken of staff that are already near completion of their qualification. The SSSC expects that staff will have completed at least 75% of the qualification at the 24-month stage.
- Grant holders will be required to provide the SSSC with a report at 12 and 24 months after receipt of grant confirming progress, setting out what was delivered, for example, what qualifications have been delivered in full under the grant as compared to the outcomes set out in the application and for which grant was provided.

## **How difficult is the application process?**

The application form is very straightforward. It asks details on:

- the size of the organisation and its total workforce (all workers irrespective of whether they are in the categories for which VSDF grant is being made available)
- how many staff across the organisation are qualified to meet SSSC registration requirements
- how many staff across the organisation are in the process of undertaking qualifications to meet SSSC registration requirements
- how many staff have yet to start qualifications that meet SSSC registration requirements.

It asks for the individuals SSSC registration number, where they are not registered yet, please provide the staff members' National Insurance number. You also need to provide the category of the staff member and the qualifications they are seeking to achieve.

Applying organisations must send supporting documents with their application; these are critical and must include a recent annual report or business plan and recent audited accounts and a training plan.

## **Acknowledgement email**

It is the organisation's responsibility to ensure the VSDF team at the SSSC have received their application for VSDF 2022-23. You will receive an acknowledgement email from a member of the VSDF Team, confirming receipt of your application. If you do not receive this within 10 working days, please contact us to ensure your application will be processed. **The Automated Reply email is not confirmation of receipt.**

**The deadline for applications is 5.00pm on 2 September 2022. We cannot consider late applications.**