



Aspire Grant Programme

Community grants that aim to make a big difference

Guidance for applicants

What are Aspire Grants?

Our Aspire Grants are accessible to anyone working with local people in the City of Sunderland. The aim of Aspire is to enable local people to improve their community and the grants are used to support a range of different activities that complement the work we do. We offer grants up to the value of £500 that meet the following themes:



Community projects

Events and projects set up and support for existing groups



Youth projects

Projects and activities designed and delivered by young people



Inclusion projects

Addressing issues around digital, social and financial inclusion



Environmental projects

Improvements to the area around your home or neighbourhood



Health and wellbeing

Projects that tackle health and wellbeing issues

As with all grant applications, terms and conditions do apply and you will receive a copy of these if your grant is successful. Applications are welcome throughout the year, but are limited to one grant per organisation per financial year.

Who can apply?

Gentoo Aspire Grants are available to local voluntary and community groups and organisations operating within the City of Sunderland, but especially within Gentoo neighbourhoods; to enable local people to improve their community. The grant must benefit Gentoo customers. Applications can be made at any time throughout the year. To apply, please complete an Aspire application form.

Gentoo is committed to the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion. Our vision is about strong communities and inspired people, and we believe that inclusive communities are stronger. We therefore celebrate diversity, and have a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, bullying or harassment in relation to sexual orientation, gender identity, and all other protected characteristics.

Some of the groups and organisations Aspire Grants have funded include:

- Art, music and drama clubs
- Children and young people's clubs
- Older people's clubs
- Parent toddler, play groups
- Resident and Community associations
- Junior football club set up costs

We are unable to make grants to:

- Profit making organisations
- Projects which promote political or religious activities
- Projects or activities which are the responsibility of a statutory organisation
- Pay for travel (in UK, or overseas)
- Pay for sponsorship or fundraising activities
- Building maintenance
- Staff salary costs



What we need from you:

- We need you to complete all of the sections/questions outlined in the application form explaining what you intend to do, why it is needed and what difference it will make to your area or the beneficiaries of your project.
- You will need Public Liability Insurance (PLI) and Employers' Liability Insurance in place as well as a Safeguarding Policy, if applicable.
- We need you to tell us how many of the beneficiaries are Gentoo customers.
- We need you to fully understand and agree that any grant awarded is only spent on what you have outlined in your application form and failure to do this could result in the funding being paid back to Gentoo.
- We need you to agree to the terms and conditions of Aspire.
- We need you to acknowledge the support of Gentoo Group Limited in any promotional activities or publicity material relating to the project or activity supported by the Aspire Grant.
- You will also need to provide details of any previous applications as well as provide all receipts and complete an evaluation.

What happens after your application is submitted?

- The completed application form will be checked to ensure that all of the questions have been completed.
- Your application will be discussed by a Customer Panel. You may be invited to an informal discussion about your application to answer any questions or queries you may have.
- You may be contacted if we need to check any details in the application or if we require more information to make a decision.
- You will be contacted in writing following the decision of the Aspire Grant Panel.

How long does the process take?

Decisions on applications will be made within six weeks of receiving an application, providing that all of the necessary information is given on the form.



How are grant payments made?

A designated person for your organisation/group must sign the Aspire Terms and Conditions to signify agreement and return them to Emperor House. Grant award payments will be issued via BACS and made payable to the voluntary or community group's bank account. We will not make payments to an individual.

How will grants be monitored?

All grants will be monitored to ensure the funding has been used for the purpose set out in the application form. This will be carried out by Gentoo and may include a visit to your group/organisation by a colleague and representative of the Customer Panel.

Once the grant has been used you must supply receipts to the value of the grant awarded. Failure to verify expenditure may result in action being taken to reclaim the grant amount and your group/organisation being excluded from applying for further Aspire Grants.

You will be required to send us information/photographs/publicity on the activity/event/resources you used the grant for and maximise any publicity acknowledging Gentoo's support.

You will be required to complete an evaluation form six months after the Aspire Grant is awarded. If this is not complete, future applications may be declined.



Marta Card Craft were awarded a £350 Aspire grant for arts and craft materials.

Patrica Ross, Gentoo customer and volunteer at Marta Card Craft, said: “We were so pleased we were able to stock up on card and craft materials that we use to create handmade greeting cards. We get together every week and love crafting the cards.”



Pins and Needles Knitting Group were awarded £500 towards knitting materials.

Freda Grey, a volunteer at Pins and Needles Knitting Group said: “We have used the money to stock up on wool and materials that will keep the group going for the rest of the year!”



Rickleton Community Garden Club were awarded a £300 Aspire grant to buy gardening equipment.

Anita Bargewell, a volunteer at Rickleton Community Gardening Club said: “We are very grateful to Gentoo for the grant funding. The children were so excited to use the new equipment”



Pennywell Neighbourhood Centre were awarded a grant to buy a new piano.

Gary Brooks, Chief Executive of Pennywell Neighbourhood Centre said: “The funding from Gentoo saved our singing group from cancellation as we were able to replace a borrowed piano and buy our own.”

Making an application

To apply, please complete an Aspire application form.

If you need help, a member of staff will be happy to assist.

You can apply online at www.gentoogroup.com/aspire

Please send your completed application form to the office below or email it to customerinvolvement@gentoogroup.com

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