

INSPIRE FUND 2025 – SEED FUND FAQs

How much funding is available?

Seed fund applicants can apply for up to £5,000 for their project. We expect to fund 4-6 seed fund projects in this round.

We will also be awarding follow on funding to past Inspire Fund grant holders, to grow the scale and impact of their previous projects, with grants of up to £20,000 per project.

- In 2019, we funded 8 projects totalling £98,974.
- In 2021, we funded 8 projects totalling £149,375.77.
- In 2022, we funded 10 projects totalling £157,049.50.
- In 2024, we awarded £104,734 across 6 seed fund projects and 4 follow-on fund projects.

Who is eligible to apply?

We encourage applications from people with a range of backgrounds and expertise – dementia researchers, community groups, artists, creative organisations, and people responsible for cultural spaces such as museums and libraries.

We want to hear from people with the ideas, passion, and ability to realise innovative public engagement projects. We encourage applicants to forge links with collaborators or groups to grow the scale of ideas and the impact of the projects.

We are especially interested in proposals led by community groups or organisations.

We are particularly interested in receiving applications from the following regions:

- Devolved nations - Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales
- North West England
- Yorkshire and North East England
- The Midlands
- East Anglia

[Locations of previously funded grants](#)

How competitive is the Inspire Fund?

We receive high levels of interest in the Inspire Fund. In 2024, we received 90 seed fund applications, and funded 6 projects. As such, the scheme is competitive and applications are carefully reviewed against the judging criteria.

We know that there are many valuable dementia awareness and engagement projects that we are unable to support through Inspire Fund. Due to the high level of interest in the scheme, projects that do not strongly meet the criteria of Inspire Fund are very unlikely to be awarded funding. We encourage potential applicants to carefully consider their proposed project against the criteria and remit of the scheme before applying.

Are there criteria my proposal needs to meet?

Inspire Fund projects must meet two core criteria:

1. Projects must engage with **underserved audiences** on the topic of dementia, such as minority ethnic communities, marginalised or socioeconomically disadvantaged people.
2. Build knowledge and understanding about **brain health** (in the context of **dementia risk reduction**) and explore ways to encourage behaviour change.

Grants will not be awarded to:

- Projects where research is the primary purpose (see FAQ for more information).
- Projects that will take place outside of the UK.
- Projects providing dementia care or other front-line services (including arts therapy).
- Projects judged to be using the scheme to further the commercial interests of an organisation.
- Cover the cost of projects that are part of an organisation's usual programme of activities.

What do you mean by 'projects where research is the primary purpose'?

The Inspire Fund was created to engage the public with the topic of dementia, through creating dialogue, sparking action for change, and involving a wider diversity of people in work related to dementia research. As such, projects can produce insight into public attitudes and values, as well as strategies for behaviour change and effective public engagement. Insight and evidence such as this can lead to peer-reviewed research publications, to help share and disseminate the findings and grow the impact of projects. As such, projects in which there are research outputs as a secondary aim of the project are in remit, but there must be a clear involvement of the public or people affected by dementia in the project.

Alzheimer's Research UK funds biomedical and clinical research to improve diagnosis, prevention, and treatment. There are separate funding schemes to support this type of research and you can find out more on our [Grants page](#). Social or carer-focussed research falls outside of our charitable remit.

Can I apply if I'm based outside the UK?

Inspire Fund is focussed on the UK, and lead applicants will need to be based in the UK and delivering projects based in the UK.

Projects can have consultants, collaborators or partners based outside the UK, and we are aware that this may result in additional impacts occurring outside the UK.

What information should I include in my application for seed funding?

The application is a chance for you to showcase your idea and what you want to achieve. We'll capture the following in the online form:

- Your contact details, so that we can follow up with you.
- Your role, where you are based in the UK and whether you are applying on behalf of a group or organisation.

We will ask you to briefly outline your project idea in 800 words. You should try to briefly cover the following:

- An outline of what you want to do with the funding.

- An outline of the outcomes you want to achieve with the project.
- Describe who you want to reach (a community you are a part of, or another target audience).
- What is the purpose or need for this project.
- Whether you have existing partners or are looking to meet potential partners to deliver your project. What expertise you may be seeking from partners.

What are the judging criteria by which applications will be judged?

Seed funding applications will be judged against the following criteria and should clearly demonstrate:

- How the project **meets the two criteria**:
 - Projects must engage with underserved audiences on the topic of dementia, such as minority ethnic communities, marginalised or socioeconomically disadvantaged people.
 - Build knowledge and understanding about [brain health](#) (in the context of dementia risk reduction) and explore ways to encourage behaviour change.
- Defined **outputs** and **outcomes** for the project and the potential to make an impact on the target audience.
- Engagement with and targeting of specific public **audiences with a clear rationale for why this audience is important**.
- Evidence of achievable and meaningful **evaluation** of the impact of the project.
- **Cost** justification and effectiveness.
- A realistic assessment of **practical issues** such as copyright, insurance, safeguarding and health and safety issues.
- Realistic **timelines** and a clear plan for delivery of the project.
- **Partnership, collaboration or consultation** with other groups or disciplines to deliver your project.

What do you mean by brain health?

Just as we can protect other areas of our health, we can take steps to keep our brains healthy and reduce our risk of developing dementia later in life. However, many people are unaware of how to take care of their brain health – only a third of people in the UK realise that it's possible to reduce their dementia risk.

We are keen to build public understanding of what brain health is, and how to take care of it. Our *Think Brain Health* campaign focuses on three key actions you can take to protect your brain – things you do to look after your heart, staying mentally sharp, and maintaining connections with loved ones and the world around you.

You can find out more about *Think Brain Health* and these three simple rules [here](#).

Can I talk to the Involvement & Engagement team about whether my idea is in remit before I submit an application?

We recommend that you attend the online [Inspire Fund information webinar](#) on 5 August 2025 from 12-1pm BST to hear from the Involvement & Engagement team about the scheme, and to put questions to them then. The event and the information held on these webpages should help you get a clear understanding of the remit and what we are looking to fund.

If you have a question that is not answered by the information in the FAQs or webpages, please email: engage@alzheimersresearchuk.org

How long should projects last?

With the nature of seed funding, we estimate projects will run for up to 12 months. If applicants are establishing new relationships with partners, we know from experience that this important stage can take longer than expected.

What constitutes an underserved audience/community?

The term 'underserved audiences/communities' means people and communities that face barriers in accessing information and services due to factors such as geographic location, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic status, primary language other than English, age or immigration status.

In the context of dementia, we know that traditional methods of disseminating information and building knowledge don't manage to reach everyone, and that particular stigmas and misunderstandings can persist in certain communities. Our [Dementia Attitudes Monitor](#) highlighted particular communities in which people saw lower value in seeking a dementia diagnosis, were less willing to undergo particular diagnostic tests, and less likely to participate in dementia research. This report and others indicate that underserved groups such as minority ethnic communities, marginalised and socioeconomically disadvantaged groups are an important section of society to reach, particularly as these groups may experience higher rates of dementia and worse health outcomes.

As such, we want to support engagement with these communities through Inspire Fund, particularly funding projects lead by members of these communities. Applicants should be clear about the communities or audiences they plan to reach, and why there is a need for engagement with them.

Do I have to have a partner or collaborator on my project?

We believe that having partners, collaborators or consultants for your project will strengthen it, and help it to have more impact. We have seen some brilliant projects with partners such as dementia researchers, communities, artists/creatives and those responsible for cultural spaces.

We would particularly like projects to have dementia research professionals as partners, to be able to link these projects to research relating to brain health and dementia.

While some applicants may have existing relationships with people or organisations they can partner with, we recognise this isn't the case for everyone. We can support successful applicants with partnership building, making introductions with our contacts and networks.

Can we form partnerships with individuals or groups not in our local area?

With seed funding, we want to help establish relationships between individuals and groups that continue beyond the life of Inspire Fund projects and feel this will be easier if partners are local to each other. However, working practices have changed and we know that people can work effectively when not in the same place. We also recognise that it may not be possible to have local partners and that they may come from further afield. Inspire Fund is focussed on the UK, and lead applicants will need to be based in the UK and delivering projects based in the UK.

Can I involve people with lived experience in my project?

Involving people with lived experience of dementia can help to shape your project and highlight key aspects related to dementia and brain health that your project could focus on. People with lived experience can include people with a diagnosis of dementia, their loved ones and carers. Their involvement should not be tokenistic, and applicants should carefully consider the role of people affected by dementia in their projects, as well as how they will provide adequate support if they look to include them in their project.

What can I spend the grant on?

The grant is intended to cover the following:

- Salaries or fees for people who are essential to the proposal such as project lead, researchers, artists or consultants that aren't already covered by another grant.
- Participant costs if relevant.
- Materials and consumables.
- Equipment that is essential to the project.
- Production costs, including marketing.
- Travel and subsistence relevant to the proposal.
- Room hire.
- Catering.
- Accessibility costs (e.g. BSL translation).
- Evaluation and dissemination of the work.
- Contingency (up to 5% of total cost).

You cannot use the grant to cover things such as:

- Costs incurred before your project starts.
- Activities taking place outside the UK.
- Providing care or support services.
- Continued delivery of activities that are part of an organisation's usual programme of activities.
- Loans, investments or capital costs.
- Emergency, top-up or maintenance funding.

How will the grant be paid?

We normally make grant payments in advance of activity. Grant payments will not be made into personal bank accounts.

Those awarded seed funds will be paid by bank transfer following the completion of the finance forms and receipt of the signed award agreement.

Grant holders are required to maintain complete and accurate budget records and evidence of expenditure and supply this information to the Involvement & Engagement team at the end of project for audit purposes.