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# **NQSW Supported Year Implementation Grant Scheme Guidance 2023-24**

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## Background

The Office of the Chief Social Work Adviser (OCSWA) intends for the NQSW Supported Year to become mandatory across Scotland from September 2024.

The NQSW Supported Year is a best practice model to support NQSW transition to the workforce which ensures an increasingly confident and competent workforce for people who use services and their families.

The Scottish Government has allocated a further £350,000 of funding to support an additional set of employers with implementation of the NQSW Supported Year. The funding is intended to enhance not replace employers' current staff development funding and activities.

The SSSC will support these new implementation areas individually and collectively. The further expanded implementation phase will include employers from a range of geographical areas and settings. There is an expectation that the learning and resources will be shared with the wider sector on a regular basis throughout the phase.

Details of the approach, core elements and respective responsibilities are available here [Overview of NQSW Supported Year Implementation 2023-24](#).

## Purpose of the funding

Employers can apply for a grant which they can use in a flexible way to meet their responsibilities to embed the core elements of the NQSW Supported Year within local arrangements and systems. The funding is not intended to replace employers' current staff development funding and activities.

We welcome applications from a range of employers of varying sizes in urban, rural and semi-rural locations.

Applicants will need to advise how the funding will support them with the implementation of the NQSW Supported Year and be sustainable beyond the grant awarded.

## Funding

Total grant funding of up to £350,000 is available. The fund is open to employers anticipating the start of NQSWs within the grant period.

Applications are welcomed from single employers and partnership arrangements. For third and independent sector applications we would expect these to be submitted as part of a partnership with a lead local authority.

There is a limit of up to £50,000 per organisation or partnership. Any applicant is welcome to discuss a potential submission with the SSSC in the first instance.

Please note this scheme is not first come, first served. We will assess all applications after the closing date.

Allocation of funds will depend on the overall number of applications received. Organisations can only submit one application.

Funding can only be used for the purpose identified above and as specified in the individual grant award letter. Funding will be paid in the financial year 2023/24. In situations where there is a successful partnership application, the total grant will be awarded to the lead partner. The expectation is for funded activities to be completed within a 12-month period of the award.

## How funding could be used

Applicants are encouraged to consider sustainable solutions to meet their local implementation needs for the NQSW Supported Year. Below are some potential examples, this is not intended to be a comprehensive or prescriptive list.

- A dedicated implementation lead (this could be backfill or partial backfill of posts to allow staff to be released or a new appointment).
- Development or improvement of local systems to identify NQSWs.
- Development or improvement of local systems to support NQSWs such as building on Individual Development Plans (IDP), peer mentoring, coaching etc.
- Development of an NQSW induction pathway and processes.
- Development of programmes of support for supervisors to use the approach.
- Improvement of communication channels such as developing online support and networking opportunities.

- Creation, refinement or modification of personal development planning processes.

## Eligibility

The fund is open to:

- employers who intend to recruit NQSWs into their workforce in the next 12 months
- single employers or partnership arrangements, for third and independent sectors applications we would expect these to be submitted as part of a partnership with a local authority being the lead.

## How we'll assess applications

A panel which includes representatives from the Office of the Chief Social Work Adviser and the SSSC will assess the applications.

Applicants should demonstrate the following criteria.

- a) A clear rationale and plan for what they propose to do to support implementation and embed the core elements of the NQSW Supported Year. Read the [Overview of NQSW Supported Year Implementation 2023-24](#).
- b) How they plan to measure the impact of the proposed changes.
- c) How they plan to sustain the changes over time.
- d) Costings including amount applied for and the employer's contribution. In kind support can be considered.

We will assess applications on their strength in relation to the above criteria. The panel will take geographical location, size and setting into consideration to maximise reach in the implementation of the NQSW Supported Year.

Where applications are assessed to be of equal merit the panel may ask those applicants for additional information to reach a decision. All decisions will be subject to the judgement of the panel.

## Monitoring

We expect successful applicants to share learning with the SSSC and other early implementation areas to influence the wider implementation. Reporting on progress of

the grant will also be required. We will provide a reporting template for completion at the mid and end of the stage of the project. Reporting will include:

- how the grant was spent and overall costs for activities
- progress in achieving the outcomes and activities identified in the application
- learning to support wider implementation.

## Application process and timeline

We've designed the application process to enable successful applicants to begin work as early as possible in the financial year 2023/24. The grant is linked to 12-month delivery and not financial year.

Stage	Date
Applications open	5 June 2023
Applications close	1 September 2023
Award decision	By 29 September 2023

Before applying please:

- read the linked guidance and documents carefully
- discuss potential ideas with relevant partners
- ensure your application is signed off by a chief social work officer or appropriate head of service/director.

To apply, send the completed the application form to [nqswproject@sssc.uk.com](mailto:nqswproject@sssc.uk.com) by 5pm on 1 September 2023.

If you have any questions, please contact [nqswproject@sssc.uk.com](mailto:nqswproject@sssc.uk.com) or attend an information session.

## Information sessions

We will host four virtual information sessions for employers when you will have the chance to find out more and ask questions. You can book your place on [Eventbrite](#) for:

9.30-10.30am, Friday 23 June 2023

4-5pm, Thursday 29 June 2023

12.30-1.30pm, Tuesday 11 July 2023

9-10am, Wednesday 19 July 2023



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