

# **Voluntary Sector Development Fund**

## **Guidance Notes 2024-25**

**Deadline for applications:  
5.00pm, 6 September 2024**

**We cannot consider late applications.**

# Voluntary Sector Development Fund

## What is the VSDF for?

The Voluntary Sector Development Fund (VSDF) contributes to the costs associated with meeting the required registration qualification criteria set by the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) to help employers in achieving a qualified, trusted, skilled, confident and valued workforce. Funding is made available subject to Ministerial decision taking into account Scottish Government priorities.

## Who can apply?

The increasing demand for qualified employees, particularly through the registration requirements of the SSSC, poses considerable pressure on employers to increase investment in the provision of qualifications, the VSDF is designed to support this investment. The following can apply:

- voluntary organisations who are a registered charity and are registered with the Care Inspectorate
- voluntary organisations that employ staff who are required to be registered with the SSSC.

Small and medium sized organisations in the voluntary sector are particularly encouraged to apply.

## Eligibility criteria

SSSC registration categories eligible for funding this year are:

Part	Level	Service type
Social care worker	Support worker	Care at home service
		Housing support service
		Care home service for adults
	Practitioner	Care at home service
		Housing support service
		Care home service for adults
	Supervisor (practice qualification only)	Care at home service
		Housing support service
		Care home service for adults

who need to achieve one of the following qualifications:

- SVQ Social Services and Healthcare at SCQF level 6, or
- SVQ Social Services and Healthcare at SCQF level 7.

For 2024-2025, the SSSC and Scottish Government would encourage level 7 applications to support supervisors who have had an extension to their qualification condition and still have to gain their practice qualification.

The sole purpose of VSDF funding is to ensure that eligible staff are able to gain a qualification required to meet SSSC registration. If an organisation's employees are SSSC registered **without** any conditions attached, they are not eligible for VSDF funding.

Find out more about these Register parts on our website:

<https://www.sssc.uk.com/registration/help-with-register-parts-fees-and-qualifications/>

## The application process

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

- 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 individual's SSSC registration number. Where they are not registered yet, you should provide the staff member's National Insurance number. You must also provide the registration category of the staff member and the qualification they are seeking to achieve.

Applying organisations must send supporting documents with their application; these are of critical importance and must include a recent annual report and accounts and a detailed training plan.

The information from applications will inform our understanding of the development and upskilling of the workforce.

Applying organisations will receive an acknowledgement email from a member of the SSSC VSDF team confirming receipt of the application. If you do not receive this within 10 working days, please contact us to ensure we have received your application. **The automated reply email is not confirmation of receipt.**

## How long is the grant for?

Qualifications must be completed **within 24 months of 1 January 2025**. **Payment will be made before 31 March 2025**. The SSSC expects that staff will have completed at least **75%** of the qualification by the 24-month stage. You must tell the SSSC about any significant delay for any staff member starting or completing their qualification **as soon as possible**.

Please refer to **Appendix 1** for key dates.

## What are the main terms of the grant?

- Funding is secured on an individual basis and must be used for the stated member of staff and for the qualification identified in the application. It is only transferable to another member of staff with prior agreement from the SSSC. Please complete **Appendix 2** to notify us of any changes.
- As a condition of the grant, organisations must ensure that the members of staff register with the SSSC within six months of acceptance of the grant.
- VSDF funding cannot be used to support employees undertaking a modern apprenticeship route.
- Any sessional/bank/relief workers must be directly employed by the applying organisation and not through an agency.
- VSDF funding cannot be used for progression of employees, e.g., if they hold an SVQ at SCQF level 6 they cannot apply for an SVQ at SCQF level 7. The exception to this is supervisors with a qualification condition extension in place.
- VSDF funding does not support the management role. Employees cannot be in a management role before starting, or while undergoing their qualification.
- Grant holders will be required to provide the SSSC with an interim report at 12 months and a final report at 24 months evidencing each individual's achievement of the agreed qualifications.
- If at any time an organisation realises it will not use the grant award in the timescales set out in the grant award letter it must inform the SSSC and repay the unspent funds.

## Who will decide which applications are successful?

A panel consisting of representatives from the SSSC, the Coalition of Care and Support Providers Scotland (CCPS) and Scottish Government oversee the application process and approve successful applications. The panel will make decisions on funding amounts. The SSSC will manage and disburse the VSDF on behalf of the panel.

Organisations must demonstrate how the funding will help them to meet these requirements through achieving the relevant qualifications. Outcomes will be measured on the numbers qualified and the resulting readiness to meet standards.

**The maximum funding awarded to any one voluntary organisation will be £24,000, with a £1,200 limit per staff member. However, if**

**the total requested funding (from all organisations) exceeds the available grant, the awarded amounts will be proportionally reduced.**

Factors which will influence allocation of funds include:

- **number of applications** – if total funding applied for exceeds the total grant available, a reduction will be applied
- **performance of organisation** – reports from previous funding years will identify where an organisation has made best use of funds
- **reports** – where an organisation has failed to submit reports regarding funding received in previous years this may result in the panel rejecting the application.

Decisions regarding all applications will be made in a fair and equitable way. It may not be possible to provide funding for all the individuals applied for. Other sources of funding may be used by employing organisations in combination with VSDF to maximise the number of people achieving qualifications.

Applications and awards will be decided in November 2024. Successful applicants will receive a grant award decision letter in December 2024. We will make payments in March 2025 upon receipt of a signed grant award letter and bank details from successful organisations.

## Guidelines for completing your application

Please be aware that all fields are mandatory and must be completed.

1. Please provide details of your organisation.

Name of organisation	
Contact name	
Position within organisation	
Email address	
Telephone	
Mobile	
Website URL	
<b>Correspondence address</b>	
Address line 1	
Address line 2	
Address line 3	
Address line 4	
Postcode	

2. Please tick box(es) relevant to your organisation and enter the relevant registration numbers. We require your Care Inspectorate Care Service (CS) numbers relating to the individuals you are applying for, not the organisations Service Provider (SP) number.

Please tick the boxes that apply to your organisation's status and state the relevant registration/charity numbers

	Tick applicable box	Charity (SC0 number) / Care Inspectorate Registration number (CS number/s relevant to application)
Board of trustees	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Charity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Please enter charity registration number
Company limited by guarantee	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Non-profit distributing	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Care Inspectorate registered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Please enter Care Inspectorate Number

This is a tick box selection, and we ask that you provide information on the types of services your organisation provides. Please select all that are relevant to your application.

Please tick the boxes that reflect the types of services you provide:

Select all types of services you provide relevant to your application	
Housing support service (HSS)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Care at home service (CAHS)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Care Home Service for Adults (CHSA)	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. In Table 1 please provide a breakdown of qualifications held by employees relevant to the VSDF eligible funding categories (Care at home, housing support and care home service for adults)

**Table 1**  
Please provide a breakdown of all staff and their qualifications status relevant to your application for the following services only - HSS, CAHS, CHSA

Staff within the following services only (HSS, CAHS, CHSA)	Qualified	Qualification on-going	Qualification not yet started (funding in place)	Qualification not yet started (No. funding in place)	Total
Social Care Workforce - Support Workers	10	10	5	1	26
Social Care Workforce - Practitioners	5	5	0	1	11
Social Care Workforce - Supervisors (Practice qualification only)	2	0	0	1	3
<b>Total of positions</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>40</b>

4. Table 2 requires details of the employees and qualification level you are applying for.

**Table 2**  
The table below asks for the details of the employees for whom you wish to apply for funding (maximum of £1,200 per employee). Applications cannot exceed £24,000 for one employing organisation.  
VSDF funding will only support qualifications that start on or after 1st January 2025 and will not cover qualifications started prior to this date.

Funding is restricted to SVQ Social Services and Healthcare at SCQF level 6 or 7. For 2024-2025, the SSSC and Scottish Government would encourage level 7 applications to support Supervisors who have had an extension to their qualification condition and still have to gain their practice qualification. The sole purpose of VSDF funding is to ensure that eligible staff are able to gain a qualification required to meet SSSC registration. If your employees are already SSSC registered without any conditions attached, they are not eligible for VSDF funding. VSDF funding cannot be used to fund the Modern Apprenticeship route.

Please ensure you complete all boxes for each staff member for whom you are applying for funding and use the dropdown boxes where provided (**do not overwrite**).

Employees Initials	SSSC registration category	Employee's SSSC Registration no (if registered) or NI number (if not yet registered)	Qualification required by SSSC	Estimated Training Start Date (not before 01.01.2025)	Amount requested £
AA	Social Care Workforce – Supervisors (Practice qualification only)	12345678	SVQ Social Services and Healthcare at SCQF level 7	01.01.2025	1200
BB	Social Care Workforce – Support Workers	12345678	SVQ Social Services and Healthcare at SCQF level 6	01.01.2025	1200
CC	Social Care Workforce – Practitioners	12345678	SVQ Social Services and Healthcare at SCQF level 7	01.01.2025	1200

The second column – SSSC registration category – is a dropdown box; please select one category (**do not overwrite**).

Please enter the employee’s SSSC registration number. Where the employee is not yet registered, please enter their National Insurance number.

The Qualification required by SSSC column is also a dropdown box; please select either SVQ Social Services and Healthcare at SCQF Level 6 or SVQ Social Services and Healthcare at SCQF level 7 (**do not overwrite**).

Please enter the intended start date for training for each staff member – **this cannot be before 1 January 2025.**

Each line amount should not exceed £1,200 and the total amount should not exceed £24,000.

5. You are required to complete Table 3 if the organisation is currently receiving any other training funds for the members of staff you are applying for.

If you have received VSDF funding in previous years please enter the financial year, total amount received and the number of staff that achieved qualifications in Table 4.

Table 3 Are you receiving any other Training funding for the staff you are applying for, i.e., SAAS, etc?			
Source of funding	£ of funding applied for	Expected Outcome	Date funding received

  

Table 4 Have you received any VSDF funding in previous years? If so please include details below		
Year funding received (YYYY/YY)	Amt Received £	Actual number of people who have achieved a qualification

6. The last section of the application asks for information about how this funding will impact on your organisation’s overall learning and development plan (training plan) if your application is successful.

Please describe how this funding would fit with your organisation's training plan and state how you will monitor and evaluate the impact of any funding you receive.

7. Before submitting your completed application, please make sure you have checked your form and ticked the check boxes. **Please ensure you include all the supporting documents along with your application.**

**Please tick to confirm that you have checked the form**

**Please tick to confirm the application is complete and ready for submission and that you have included a copy of your most recent Annual Report & Accounts and Training Plan**

Please note that applications must be received by **the stated deadline. We cannot consider any late applications.**

All applications will receive an acknowledgement email from a member of the SSSC VSDF Team, confirming receipt of your application. If you have **not** received this within 10 working days, please contact the VSDF team [vsdf@sssc.uk.com](mailto:vsdf@sssc.uk.com) to ensure we've received your application. **The automated reply email is not confirmation of receipt.**

Please put the following information in your email subject line: **VSDF application ORGANISATION NAME**. This helps when there is one contact applying for multiple organisations.

**Please note it is the organisation's responsibility to make sure we have received their application.**

Any organisation needing clarification of the criteria or having difficulty in completing the application form can contact: [vsdf@sssc.uk.com](mailto:vsdf@sssc.uk.com)

## Appendix 1

## VSDF 2024-25 timeline



