

## FAQs - Your station, Your community Improvement Fund

### The fund

1. How much money is the fund?

GTR will be allocating up to £500,000 to fund projects.

2. What is the fund aiming to do?

Our improvement fund - your station, your community - seeks to support local charities, our customers, and the communities on our line of route, focusing on the causes that are of key importance to us.

The fund is expected to support a wide range of proposals that will bring improvements and benefits on issues that are important to and impact local communities and the railway. We are particularly focused on mental health, diversity and inclusion, employability and confidence building, environment and sustainability, and creating a welcoming station environment.

3. Will you allocate the funding to one project or a number?

Funding will be allocated to a number of projects. The minimum amount that can be requested is £1000 and the maximum is £50,000. For projects requesting £10,000 or more a follow-up call will be arranged to talk through the application with a member of GTR's Community Team.

4. Has GTR allocated a fund like this before?

Although we have launched similar funds in the past, this is the first time GTR has launched the your station, your community improvement fund. The fund



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has been a feature of recent rail contracts and has been implemented by other TOCs including TPE, LNER, SWR, WMT, and LNWR.

5. Is this a yearly funding programme?

This will be an annual funding programme and GTR will be allocated up to £500,000 to fund projects.

## Eligibility

6. Am I eligible to apply for this fund?

We welcome applications from registered charities, community groups and other not-for-profit organisations such as rail user groups, community rail partnerships, business partnerships, town councils, parish councils, community of interest companies and schools. However, we can only fund activity which is extracurricular and outside the school's usual statutory remit.

We are looking for applications located within 10 – 15 miles of one of our stations on our network, where there is an identified social need. The application should outline how the project will work with the community to mitigate the social need and therefore help to create a more inclusive, prosperous and connected community.

Partnership working is encouraged in the funding programme where it extends reach into communities and offers greater opportunity to those communities.

7. Are there any particular key themes or focus areas?

The key themes the fund supports are those areas with a demonstrable link to our



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business, vision and values, where we believe we can achieve the greatest impact.

The themes are:

- **Enhancing our stations to be a welcoming environment**
  - Regenerating redundant station spaces for community hubs, providing space for activities that enrich the local community and bring station estate back into use. Creating a welcoming ambiance to our stations enhancing our customers' experience.
- **Positive Mental Health**
  - Mental health activities that encourage working with local partners to signpost people to support services or initiatives that have a positive impact on people's wellbeing. Connecting people together to take positive action to prevent suicide, an issue that has devastating and far reaching impact on our people, customers and communities.
- **Diversity and Inclusion**
  - Supporting diverse and inclusive community projects, creating opportunities for learning and the social mobility of more marginalised groups. Our ambition is to create an inclusive culture where customers and colleagues feel able to be themselves and feel they belong to their local communities.
- **Employability and confidence building**
  - Promoting employability and education amongst marginalised groups by investing in the skills development for now and the future, creating a talent pipeline to support the South East economy.
- **Environmental Sustainability**
  - Supporting environmental projects and encouraging sustainable mobility shift to encourage customers to make greener choices to travel by rail and getting to our stations sustainably - by bike, bus, foot or electric car.

## How to apply

8. How do I apply?



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The online application form will go live on 28 June 2022 and will close at 23:59 on 30 July 2022.

We have an online application form on the website that closes on 30 July.

To make the application process accessible to all we do also have an editable word formatted version available that can be downloaded, completed and returned to [community@gtrailway.com](mailto:community@gtrailway.com). If an alternative is still required to complete the application form then please make contact via the email address provided, leaving your contact details, organisation details, and any special requirements you need to complete the form. Applications will be online based, and the form will open for applications on 28 June.

## 9. What will a good application include?

- An application that clearly links in with one of the following areas - mental health, diversity and inclusion, employability and confidence building, enhancing our stations to be a welcoming environment, and environment and sustainability;
- A factual but concise project scope outlining why financial support is needed;
- Budget breakdown of funding request, overall project budget and key project milestone;
- Details on whom the primary beneficiaries are and numbers of beneficiaries; and
- What benefits will be delivered initially and a mechanism for measuring the benefits and impact.

Funding will need to be spent in full, and projects completed by 31 March 2024.

## 10. What is the application timeline?



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- Applications open: 28 June 2022
- Applications close: 30 July 2022
- Review: July – September 2022
- Submitted to DfT: December 2022
- Notification: Q1 2023
- Funding received: April 2023
- Funding spent and fully committed: 31 March 2024

## 11. When do I need to apply by?

Applications open on 28 June 2022 and all applications must be submitted before 23:59 on 30 July 2022.

## 12. When will I hear if my application has been successful?

GTR is required to submit a shortlist of recommended applications to the DfT for 15 December 2022, the DfT will have final approval of schemes. We hope to confirm project funding by early March 2023, to enable applicants to be ready to start their proposal in April 2023.

## 13. When will the funding be allocated?

Funding will be allocated to begin delivery from April 2023.

## 14. When do successful projects need to have completed their work by?

The funding must be spent and fully committed by 31st March 2024.

## 15. Do I need to include the cost of the project in my application?

All applications should confirm the amount of funding that is requested.



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16. What are the minimum and maximum costs that will be awarded?

The minimum amount that can be requested is £1000 and the maximum is £50,000. For projects requesting £10,000 or more a follow-up call will be arranged to talk through the application with a member of GTR's Community Team.

We will consider funding applications that include up to 25% attributed to core costs (including staffing).

We can accept Capital cost elements to the bids, where they are directly related to the project requirements – which we will judge on a case-by-case basis.

17. Will I need to upload any supplementary documents alongside my application?

All answers should be provided in the application form. Only one additional document can be uploaded with the application.

18. How will you monitor objectives/deliverables for successfully funded projects?

We will work with the successful organisations to give the best outcomes for the communities that we serve . We are requesting that organisations with the expertise in their respective areas demonstrate what the best outcomes should be.

We will agree a reporting frequency with each organisation appropriate to scale of the project, where we would look for updates on project milestones, flag any risks to the project and share any relevant imagery so we can celebrate and share news of your project. For all projects this will include an end of project report.



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# Improvement Fund

Your station. Your community.



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Govia Thameslink Railway

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