

Feedback from groups about grants

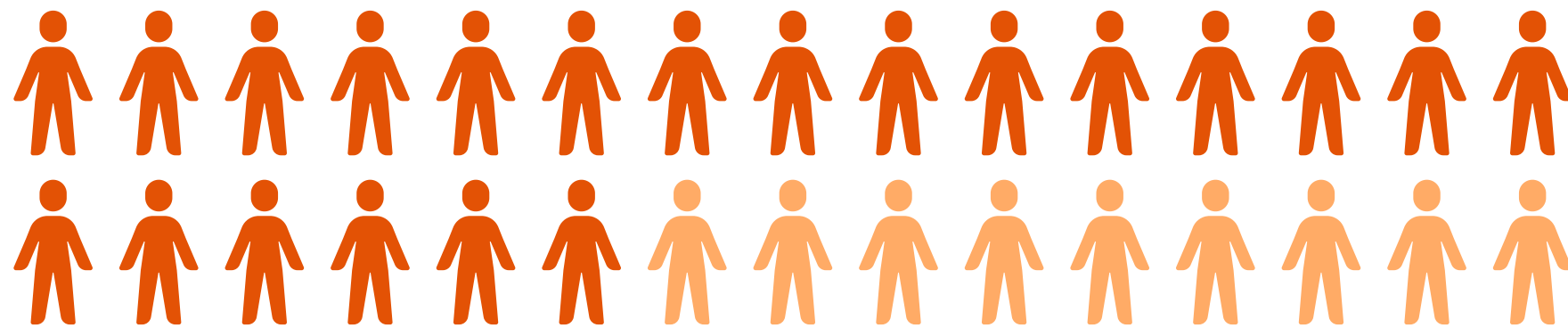
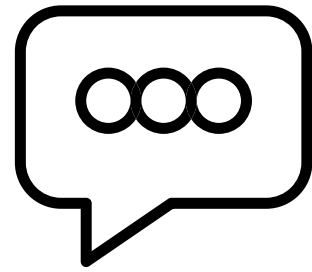
Zoom workshops and online surveys - June 2021

Looking at current challenges with grants, and what the priorities are to start working on



Who we heard from

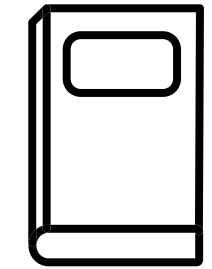
Workshops



30 attendees

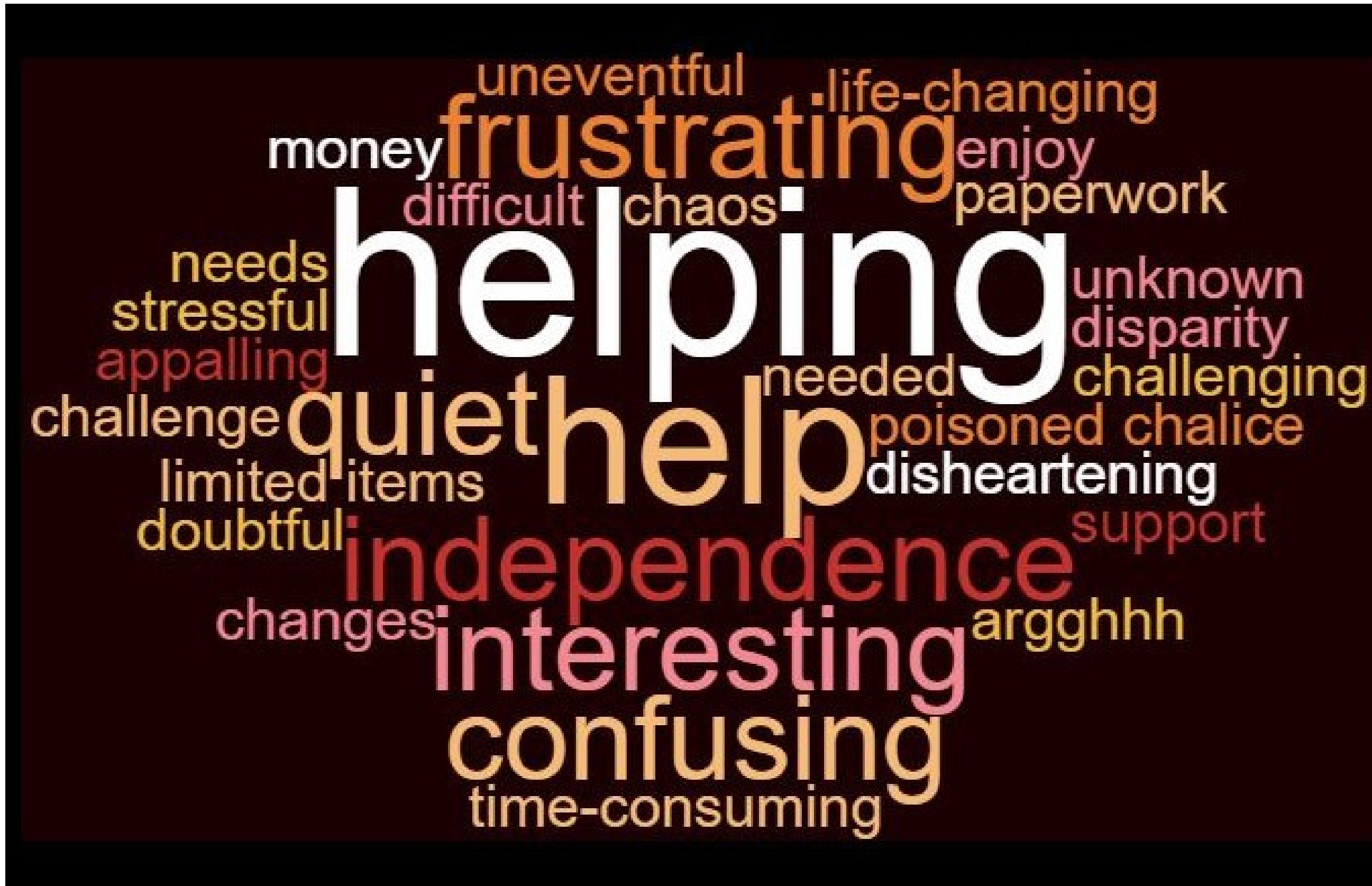
- 21 support volunteers
- 9 other roles - group coordinators, finance volunteers or other

Surveys



15 surveys

- 13 volunteers with some experience or very experienced with grants
- 2 volunteers new to grants

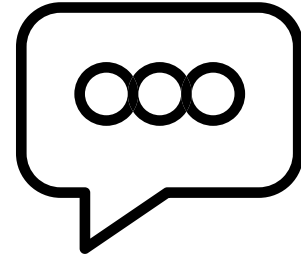


We asked
volunteers to give
the first word that
comes to mind,
when thinking
about grants

One word

Bigger words ◀.....▶ said by more people

41 replies and comments noted across four workshops



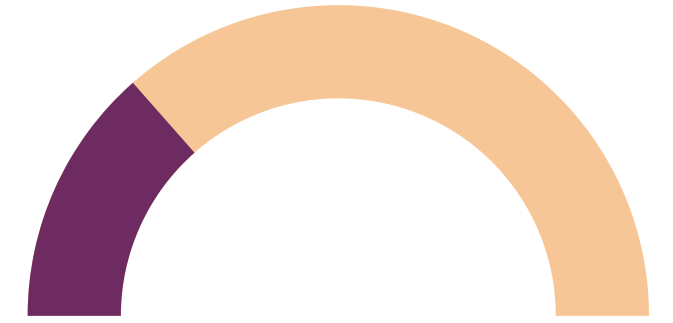
Workshops

"What are the challenges for groups giving grants?"

The most mentioned topics, and some of the examples given

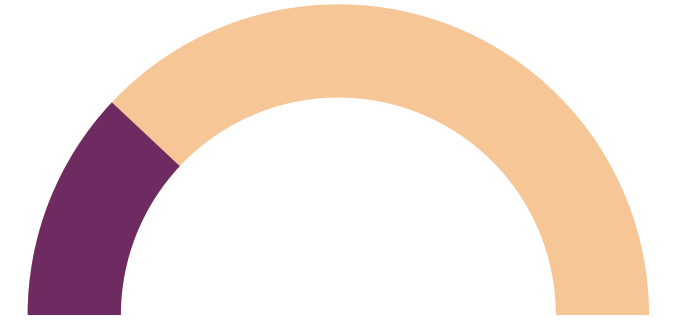
Processes (11 out of 41)

Letters of support hard to get and felt not always needed, forms can be difficult



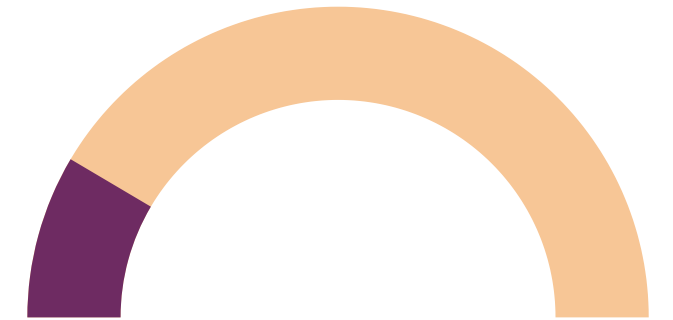
Practical issues or capacity (10 out of 41)

Local variations, no face to face visits, hard to engage enough volunteers



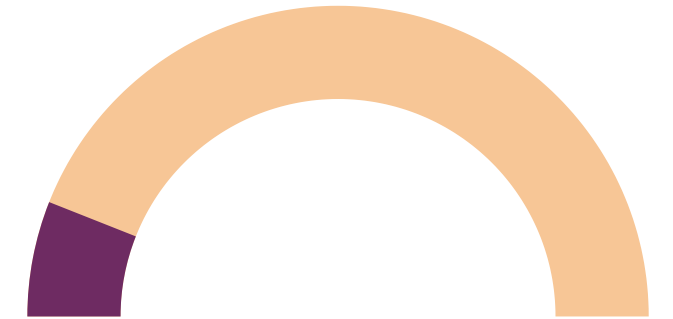
Rules (7 out of 41)

Lower grant limits not meeting need, savings confusing, category list limited

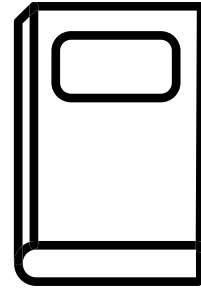


Knowledge / training / information (5 out of 41)

Need for more training - not just online, knowledge about benefits or statutory funding



38 replies and comments given in 15 surveys



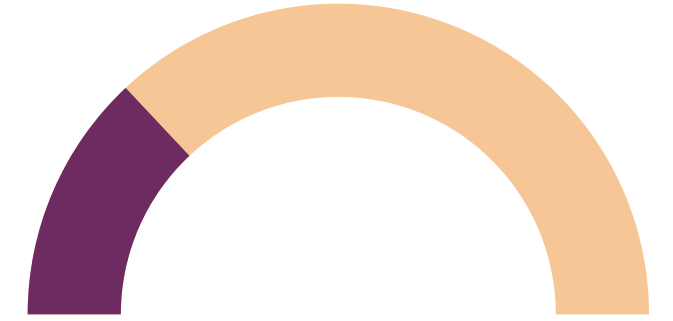
Surveys

"What are the challenges for groups giving grants?"

The most mentioned topics, and some of the examples given

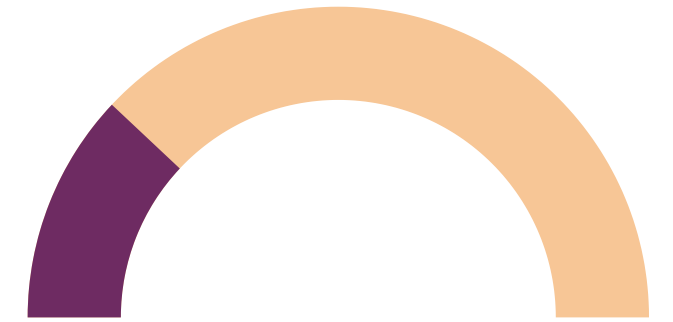
Practical issues (10 out of 38)

Dealing with applicants, finding top ups, not being able to meet in person



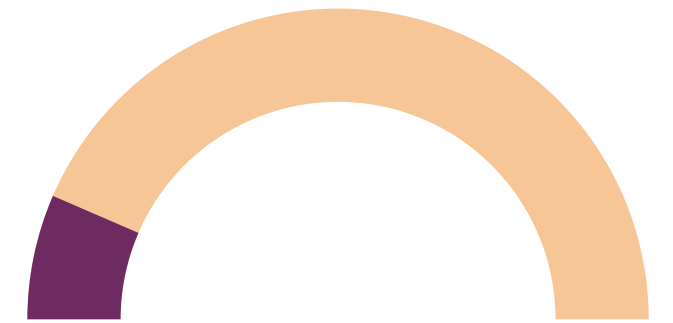
Funds / money (9 out of 38)

Not having enough funds, not being able to fundraise



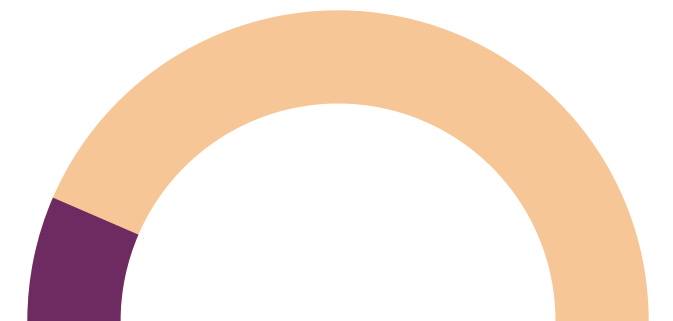
Processes (5 out of 38)

Supporting information - getting letters or quotes, issues with application form



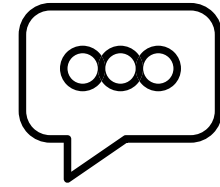
Knowledge / training / information (5 out of 38)

Need for more training, or clarity around rules and processes



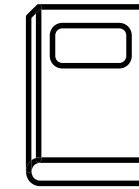
Challenges with grants - priority

Workshops



- Clarifying savings limits, and making process and paperwork as simple as possible
- New maximum grant limits being too low
- Application form needs to be proportional and simplified
- Professional letter of support can be hard to get
- Having enough funds
- Volunteer capacity - difficulty engaging enough volunteers
- Having opportunities to access support

Surveys



- Not having funds / limited ability to fundraise
- List of items that can be considered is limited
- No face-to-face contact
- Keeping coordinating team members engaged
- Training – for groups that used to use the grants team to assess
- Getting more people to apply
- How to say 'No'
- How to pay when an award is given
- Application forms – too long / difficult for some

Successes and positives

Helping local people in need

Working through a third party proved a success during 'lockdown'.... they had direct contact with the person.... getting a fully completed application form, making a decision and purchasing the item was a very straightforward process.

...each grant is the top success for the person involved. I always remember a response when I said, so you are only wanting £87 - "£87 might as well be a thousand if you have not got it".

Ability to change peoples' lives (can be small amounts that do this)

Pulling other charities, other companies and the group together for a good outcome

Groups can respond quickly to need and running the grants process provides local people with a reason to link to their local group

What's needed from our grants scheme?

Volunteers

**Guidance / training /
information / support**

Simple system

Applicants

**Equal - able to apply
wherever you live**

**Quick, clear, easy
process**

**Support - filling in form,
process of applying**

Other comments and suggestions....

Make matches between groups
– one with no funds might
assess for another who could
help first group with funds

If group doesn't have funds and
need top up from somewhere
else, could this be another group?

Really welcome having opportunities to come
together, share knowledge (an informal grants
version of coffee and chats was discussed and
seen as a very positive idea)

Some comments that grant application form is too
long, some that it is fine - mixed views



Wide range of group finances -
many groups felt lack of funds
are a challenge, but some have
funds and few grant applicants

Great that we are involving
volunteers but please remember a
lot of us have MS and may need time
to process things, and have fatigue



We asked volunteers to give a word or phrase to describe how they'd like the grants service to look this time next year

One word

Bigger words ◀.....▶ said by more people

What's next?

Ask for volunteers to join a working group, and work together to:

▶ **simplify things as much as we can**

- making sure rules and processes are clear and straightforward

▶ **work through issues raised in this feedback, including:**

- how to make grant limits work when many groups have limited funds
- how to keep things simple while still meeting more complex needs, like adaptations



Start regular grants get togethers on Zoom for volunteers to chat, share ideas and get updates



Run training sessions about grants

...keep an eye on the Community Networks email for details