

Applicant Pack



Welcome!

We're so pleased that you are exploring a grant from The Willats Trust.

We want to see the most deprived communities across England, Wales and Ireland completely transformed by the love of Jesus. Within this big vision, our mission is to come alongside like-hearted gospel partners who also share this vision and support them through adding our funding to what God has called them to do. Like the feeding of the five thousand, we believe that when we all bring what is in our hand, however inadequate that looks, then God can supernaturally multiply this to bless others.

There are many amazing gospel-partners who share this vision, those doing and those supporting via funding, and each of us is serving a greater kingdom vision which has many forms of outworking. At the Willats Trust, we especially feel called to support Christian workers serving faithfully in communities where the need is great, resources are limited, and work can be lonely or overlooked. We believe that long-term, relational ministry changes lives — and we want to help make that possible by funding the salaries of people doing it on the ground. Our desire is to see a Jesus-centric worshipping community embedded in the fabric of every deprived neighbourhood around the UK, whether that is helping fund a new church expression or helping fund growth of an existing ministry. Our priority is to see a Jesus-centric community in those areas which currently have nothing, and that is a key factor which influences our grant-making.

This Applicant Pack is here to walk you through how we work, who and what we fund, and what to expect from the application process. It also gives you a sense of what matters to us — not just in terms of criteria, but in terms of values.

Inside this pack, you'll find:

- **Frequently Asked Questions -**
- **Application Materials – including the Expression of Interest (EOI) guidance and what we'll need from you later**
- **A Step-by-Step Overview of our grant cycles and what happens when**
- **Key Funding Priorities and Criteria – what we're looking for and why**
- **What to Expect if You're Funded – including payments, reporting, and ongoing support**
- **Practical Tips for a strong application and what we've learned along the way**

We're not a large or impersonal funder. We aim to be practical, thoughtful and encouraging — committed to building strong partnerships, not just giving out grants. We know applying for funding

can be time-consuming, so we've worked hard to keep things proportionate and respectful of your time.

If after reading this you're still not sure whether your work fits, please feel free to get in touch — we're always happy to have a conversation.

We hope this is the start of a strong partnership where, together, we can get behind where God is already going ahead.

Grace and Peace.

The Willats Trust Team

About the Willats Trust

The Willats Trust exists to see our most deprived communities and marginalized groups of society transformed by the love of Jesus. We do this through helping fund Christian workers share the gospel in their local community. In practice, this means we help fund evangelists, church planters, church pastors, youth workers, family workers, community workers – in fact, we are open to funding anyone with a passion for sharing the gospel in communities experiencing high levels of deprivation across England, Wales and Ireland. We've been doing this since 1858 — quietly funding people rooted in places others often pass by.

Our focus is on salaries, not projects — helping workers stay present, committed, and sustainable in the roles God has called them to. We don't fund individuals directly, but partner with churches and para-church charities to financially support roles directly linked to sharing the good news of Jesus, with strong support, accountability and local connection.

If you're working in an area of significant need — or supporting someone who is — and meet the above criteria, we would love to hear from you.

Frequently Asked Questions

About Our Funding

Who do you fund?

We help fund salaries for people working in churches, charities and voluntary organisations in deprived communities and whose role is directly linked to sharing the good news of Jesus. We do not fund individuals directly — only through established charitable organisations.

What do you fund?

We fund salaries, not projects or capital costs. Our grants are intended to support frontline workers in ministry or outreach roles by helping cover their salary costs.

How do you judge a deprived community?

We use the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) data tool to help assess levels of place-based deprivation, so if your work is rooted in a particular geographic area, please include that information in your application.

That said, we know that deprivation is far more complex than a postcode. We also recognise and value work with communities experiencing non-place-based deprivation — for example, prisoners, refugees, people in addiction recovery, or those experiencing homelessness.

So please don't feel restricted by government data — use your expression of interest to tell us your story, the challenges people are facing in your community, and why your work is needed. We're listening.

Do you fund new roles or existing ones?

We're open to both, but roles that are new or can demonstrate significant impact to date and you wish to expand the work are likely to score more highly. We want to support work that is strategic, sustainable, and impactful.

Can we apply for funding for more than one role?

We're open to funding more than one role within an organisation, and each application will be reviewed individually on its own merits. However, demand for funding support is high, and we receive many strong applications each cycle, so to ensure fairness and balance across our portfolio, a second application from the same organisation may not score as highly — especially where funding has already been awarded.

Do you fund centrally-funded or large national organisations?

Our focus is on organisations where our support makes a distinctive difference — typically smaller, local churches or charities working in underserved communities. We do not fund roles that are already centrally supported, such as ordained clergy posts or salaried positions within large denominational structures. Instead, we're passionate about backing lay workers — people rooted in their communities, often serving at the edges, bringing the gospel to life through practical mission, outreach, and relational ministry. These are the roles that often slip through the funding net, and where our grants can have the biggest impact

What About Scotland?

The eagle-eyed among you might have noticed we talk about England, Wales and Ireland. We love Scotland, and more importantly so does God! Unfortunately, without boring you on the history of church denominations and the political make-up of the UK in the 1800's, legally we can't fund in Scotland yet. However, we want to and are working with the Charities Commission to try and enable this. In the meantime, if you are in Scotland reading this, please get in touch as there are some amazing fellow-funders who focus on Scotland, and we will gladly signpost you.

Application Process and Timelines

When can we apply?

We run two grant cycles per year. The cycle for 2025/26 will be as follows.

- Cycle 1: Opens in September 2025 for applications - Grants awarded in March 2026
- Cycle 2: Opens in March 2026 for applications - Grants awarded in September 2026

What does the application process involve?

1. Submit a short Expression of Interest (EOI) (no more than 2 sides of A4) or video if writing isn't your thing (but no more than 5 minutes).

2. If shortlisted, we'll invite you to a Zoom call to learn more.
3. If selected, only then will you be asked to complete a detailed application form including uploading due diligence documents.
4. Applications are reviewed and approved by our Board of Trustees.
5. Decisions are made and funding is awarded in March or September, depending on the cycle.

How will we know if we've been shortlisted?

We'll contact you after your initial expression of interest has been submitted if your application has been shortlisted for a Zoom conversation.

Reporting and Accountability

What reporting do you require if funded?

We aim to keep reporting light-touch but meaningful — focused on learning and relationship, not box-ticking. Here's what you can expect:

- Each year, you'll complete a short report to confirm your details are still up to date (or let us know if anything has changed).
- We'll also arrange a brief online catch-up — an informal conversation to reflect on what you're learning, how things are going, and how the role is making a difference.
- At some point during your funding period, we'll arrange an in-person visit to your organisation — just to see the work in action and hear more about your context.
- When your funding comes to an end, we'll have a final wrap-up conversation to reflect on the journey, gather any feedback, and hear what's next for you. We may also ask for a short write-up to share with our Board or supporters.

We know your time is valuable — so we keep things as simple as possible, while still learning together along the way.

Do you require detailed financial or performance reports while being funded?

No, unless something changes. We're focusing on learning and impact, not bureaucracy. We'll ask for honest reflections and stories where possible.

Ongoing & Repeat Funding

Can we apply again after our current grant ends?

Yes — organisations can continue to apply for new roles without a gap in funding terms. However, we receive a high number of applications and it's possible that newer projects or applicants who haven't previously received funding may be prioritised — especially where we see a clear strategic or missional need. A request for a new role in an organisation we have previously funded, for instance, may be more likely to score highly than a continuation of the same remit, unless there's clear evidence of ongoing or increased impact

What if our staff member leaves during the grant?

We may allow the funding to be paused and resumed if a replacement is found, provided the role still aligns with the original purpose. Please contact us to discuss — this will be considered case by case.

Due Diligence & Compliance

What documents will we need to provide?

If invited to apply, you'll need to send:

- Latest financial accounts and annual report
- A copy of your safeguarding policy
- Character references for the person funding is being requested for
- A job description for the funded role
- A budget, showing how funding for this role sits in the wider financial framework
- Confirmation of bank details (securely submitted)
- A signed agreement confirming compliance with our terms

Application Materials

We know that applying for funding can sometimes feel overwhelming — so we've worked hard to keep our process as simple and supportive as possible. Our forms have been designed with this in mind, and there are just a few key steps to be aware of.

Step 1: Expression of Interest

This is the first step in the process. It's your opportunity to tell us a little about your work, your community, and your plans for the future. You can do this by submitting a short-written overview (1–2 pages), or by recording a short video — whichever feels more natural to you.

You can complete the Expression of Interest form [here](#).

Step 2: Conversation

If we think your project might be a good fit, we'll invite you to a short Zoom call. This isn't a formal interview — just a chance to have a conversation, explore your vision together, and ask any clarifying questions.

Step 3: Full Application (by invitation only)

If, after that conversation, we both feel that funding from The Willats Trust is the right next step, we'll invite you to submit a full application. There's no need to complete this form unless we've asked you to — we'll send you the link and support you through it if we reach this stage.

At that point, we'll also ask for relevant governance documents, such as:

- your safeguarding policy
- recent accounts
- references or referee contact details

We'll let you know exactly what we need and when.

A Step-by-Step Overview of our grant cycles and what happens when

Understanding Our Grants Cycle

We operate two funding cycles a year. Each cycle takes around 7 months from Expressions of Interest opening to grants being awarded.



Key Funding Priorities and Criteria

What we're looking for — and why it matters

At the heart of our funding is a simple goal: to support Christian workers serving in hard places, doing gospel work that transforms lives and communities.

We fund the core salaries of individuals doing this work — not projects, programmes or equipment (all of which are great, but not what we fund!). We believe people make a transformational

difference. Relationships are at the heart of ministry, and we want to help give those called to plant or lead churches in hard places or share the gospel in hard places the financial security to focus fully on the ministry they're called to.

Here's what we're looking for when we consider applications:

Who and What We Fund

1. Salaried Christian Workers with a focus on evangelism

We fund roles (not organisations or projects) — typically evangelists, church planters, outreach workers, community pastors, or people in similar ministry roles. The focus should be on sharing the good news of Jesus in word and action, often with those on the margins.

These roles should be employed or contracted by a host organisation, such as a church or Christian charity — we don't fund individuals directly. We will want to see that there are suitable oversight, governance and accountability structures in place. We will also want to see a job specification that gives us confidence the primary focus of the role is evangelism.

2. Deprived Communities and Proximity

We prioritise roles based in communities facing economic, social or spiritual deprivation. We use Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) data to assess areas, but we also welcome your insight — you know your context best. Our usual criterion to fund is that your community should be in the top 20% of deprivation as measured by IMD. We also recognise non-place-based deprivation, such as working with refugees, prisoners, or those affected by addiction, so in these cases, don't worry about IMD.

Beyond IMD though, we also want to see proximity to that community. The more you are physically proximate to the deprived community and the more embedded, the higher weight we attach to this (see Incarnational Relationships below).

You can check IMD data for your community [here](#).

You can also find more information about poverty in your parish using the [Church Urban Fund Look up Tool](#).

3. Smaller, Underfunded Organisations

We focus on grassroots work, often in churches or charities without significant central funding. If you're part of a large or well-resourced organisation, it's unlikely we're the right funder for you. We also focus on supporting Christian workers who are not ordained, helping resource those who might otherwise fall through the cracks.

4. Long-Term, Incarnational and Relational Ministry

We value depth over scale. We look for roles that involve building relationships over time — rooted in local contexts, working with individuals and families, and committed to sharing life and faith in real, often difficult places.

What Else Matters to Us

The Fingerprints of God

We get really excited when it feels like we are following where God is already going ahead. That means we look for what we like to call the fingerprints of God in applications. Where are the elements of your story that make no sense other than God or faith? If you do have these God-moments in your story, we would love to hear them.

Collaboration, Not Dependency

We do not require complete “match funding” — but we do expect organisations to bring something to the table. Whether it's covering overheads, housing, programme costs, or just demonstrating broader financial commitment. We want to see that our grant is part of a shared investment, not the sole lifeline. We want to offer a hand-up, not a hand-out.

Accountability and Good Governance

We look for organisations with healthy structures, clear safeguarding policies, and a track record of managing people and resources well. You don't need to be perfect — but we do need to see you're responsible.

Clear Vision and Fit

We look for applications that show a clear sense of call, vision for the role, and how it fits with the broader mission of the organisation and community. The strongest applications tend to be from those who are actively supporting and championing the work on the ground.

Good Plans but Hold Them Loosely

We like Proverbs 21:31: 'man prepares the horse for battle, but God gives the victory'. We will want to see a plan, from budgets to ideas on how you will put your vision into practice and whether the size of the vision is proportionate to the resources and effort being invested? Is what is being proposed realistic and implementable? What is your prior experience of doing this? At the same time, we want to hold those plans loosely and be open to the Holy Spirit disrupting our plans! If we fund, this is a partnership. Our focus is sowing responsibly. We want to use our God-given common sense and wisdom to sow well, but we are not looking for rigid target impact KPI's such as X baptisms or Y people doing Alpha or Christianity Explored. So long as we sow responsibly, God gives the increase in his time and way, but we also want to be good stewards so we will ask for accountability and feedback via annual reports and will visit in person or connect by zoom. However, if the plans don't turn out as expected because God took things in a different direction and there is reasoning behind that so that we are achieving the original objective via a different route, that's OK ... partners work it out.

How We Fund

Grant Amounts

We typically fund roles for up to three years, and most of our full-time salary grants are around £15,000 per year (see below on Match Funding). We're happy to consider lower amounts, especially for part-time roles.

If you're considering applying for more than £15,000 per year, please do get in touch for a conversation first. We're always open to discussion, but we'll want to see a clear case for how the

organisation is also bringing something to the table — financial or otherwise — to help make the role sustainable beyond the life of our grant.

Match Funding

We do not have a fixed match-funding requirement, but our preference would be that we fund 50% of any salary and that the employing organization commits to funding the other 50%. What matters most to us is that everyone brings something to the table and that there is genuine collaboration and shared investment in the role.

We want to see organisations demonstrating a clear commitment to the work — whether that's through financial contribution, resourcing, leadership time, or wider project support. This shared approach helps ensure the role is embedded and sustainable beyond our funding, rather than depending solely on it. We are also open to funding higher percentages in earlier years to give time to build wider support. A key area we will probe is how passionate are you about this role, and an indicator of that for us is how it is prioritised in your existing resources allocation. We want to add to what God has invited you into and therefore we will never fully fund any role, and sometimes we will go higher than 50% funding.

What to Expect if You're Funded

If your application is successful, we want the next steps to feel straightforward and supportive — not overwhelming. Here's what you can expect once funding is confirmed:

Formal Grant Agreement

We'll issue a simple grant agreement that sets out:

- The role we're funding
- The amount and duration of the grant
- Key expectations (e.g. reporting, use of funds, changes in circumstances)
- Our terms and conditions of funding, including safeguarding, accountability and data. We ask all funded organisations to read and sign this before the first payment is made.

Payment Schedule

Grants are paid quarterly, one month in arrears, with set payment dates each year:

- Mid-January
- Mid-April
- Mid-July
- Mid-October

Annual Review

Each year, we'll ask for an update on:

- Whether the role is continuing as expected
- Any key changes (e.g. staffing, financial position, church leadership, safeguarding policies)

- A brief reflection on impact — what's going well, what's been hard, and what you're learning

We'll also aim to have a short annual Zoom call and (where possible) at least one in-person visit during the life of the grant.

This isn't a "performance review" — we're more interested in honest updates than polished reports. It helps us learn and stay connected to the work we're funding.

Staff Changes or Role Adjustments

If the person in the funded role moves on, please speak to us as soon as possible. In some cases, we may be able to pause or transfer the grant to a suitable replacement — but this isn't guaranteed and must align with the original intent of the funding.

If the role itself needs to change, let's talk. We're open to conversations about how funding can remain useful and effective.

Ongoing Relationships

We see our funding as a partnership, not a transaction. We aim to be approachable, flexible and relational throughout. We're here to cheer you on, not check up on you.

If challenges come up — funding gaps, team changes, tough seasons — we'd rather hear about it early. We may not always be able to help, but we're here to listen and think together. We also know lots of churches and people who are probably also struggling with those same issues and so we might be able to connect you up for advice or new ideas.

Practical Tips for a Strong Application (and a few things we've learned along the way)

We know applying for funding can feel a bit daunting — especially if you're doing that on top of running a church, leading an organisation, or holding a million other plates in the air. So here are some practical tips to help make your application as strong (and stress-free) as possible. These come from what we've learned over the years — both from great applications and from the things that tend to get missed.

The Story So Far

We want to hear your heart for your community. How you got to this point and what you think God is asking you to do next. Have there been any God-moments of encouragement along the way? Our single biggest internal criteria is what we call 'the fingerprints of God'. Where are the moments in your story that make no sense other than God was on the move?

Focus on the Role

Our funding is all about supporting people, not projects — so make sure your application is centred on the person and the role you're asking us to fund. We want to understand:

- What they do day to day
- Who they're working with
- How their presence is making a difference
- Why they're needed in this place and context

If the person isn't in post yet, tell us about your recruitment plans, what kind of person you're looking for, and why the role matters.

Help Us Understand the Community

Tell us what the area is like — and why this kind of work matters here. We'll use IMD (Index of Multiple Deprivation) data to assess the level of need, but your local insight is really valuable. Think about things like:

- What challenges are people facing in this community?
- Are there issues like isolation, poverty, addiction, youth crime, poor housing, etc?
- What's the spiritual landscape like?
- What difference is your organisation making?
- What other churches or para church organisations are active in your area

We also welcome applications working with communities facing non-place-based deprivation (e.g. refugees, prisoners, survivors of abuse) — just help us understand the need and your approach.

Show Us How the Role is Supported.

We're interested in how the role is being supported and sustained — not just financially, but in terms of:

- Leadership and line management
- Accountability and supervision
- Safeguarding
- Spiritual and emotional support - It's important to us that the person in the role isn't left isolated.

Be Honest About the Finances

We don't expect you to have big budgets or polished presentations — but we do need a clear picture of your financial position. Show us:

- How this role fits into your overall budget
- What you're contributing (even if it's not salary match-funding)
- Any other support you have (or are seeking)

Remember: we're not looking for perfection — just clarity and realism.

Keep It Clear and Human

You don't need fancy language or grant-writing experience — just tell the story clearly and honestly. If you're not sure how something will come across, imagine you're explaining it to a friend who cares about the work but doesn't know your context. And if in doubt: simpler is better.

Final Checks

Before you submit:

- Have someone else read through it with fresh eyes
- Double-check the job description is attached
- Make sure safeguarding and financial documents are up to date
- Check your dates fit within our grant cycle

We Want to Know About You (or the Person You're Applying For)

We don't just want to know what the role is — we want to know who's in the role, and why it matters to them.

Tell us:

- How did you come to faith?
- What's shaped your calling to this kind of work?
- What brought you to this community, or kept you there?
- What excites you about the ministry you're doing — and what's been hard?

If you're applying on behalf of someone else, we'd love to hear about them too. You don't need their full testimony, but do help us understand:

- What's led them to this role?
- Why are they the right person for this work?
- What's their character, faith, and heart for the community?

We fund people, not just posts — so helping us get to know the person behind the application really helps us make thoughtful decisions.

And Finally...

We know that applying for funding isn't always easy — especially when you're deeply involved in the work on the ground, so thank you for taking the time to read this pack and consider whether the Willats Trust might be a good fit for you.

If anything in this pack feels unclear, or your circumstances don't quite fit the mould, please do get in touch at grants@willatstrust.org. We're always happy to talk things through.

Whatever stage you're at, we're praying for strength and encouragement in your ministry — and we hope this might be the beginning of something good.

The Willats Trust Team