

Shoosmiths Foundation

Nicola Ellen, head of corporate responsibility and chair of the grants committee, details the grantmaker's funding criteria

Law firm Shoosmiths launched the Shoosmiths Foundation in June 2021.

Its purpose is working to help address societal issues, empower sustainable change, and improve the lives of the people and the environment in the UK.

The foundation builds on Shoosmiths' existing community investment programme which supports local charity partners through staff fundraising and firm donations, staff volunteering and pro bono legal advice.

Grants are available for UK registered charities undertaking work in the UK, with funding decided by the Shoosmiths Foundation grants committee.

Our funding priorities are:

- Advance social mobility in the legal sector, and across the UK, in line with the Shoosmiths social mobility action plan. Particular focus on charitable organisations which share our belief that "talent can come from anywhere", and which align their interventions with local socio-economic analysis and need.
- Advance a carbon net-zero UK.
- Advance access to justice in the UK.

Calls are announced once or twice a year inviting charities to apply for grants of between £25,000 and £50,000.

Rounds one and two were aimed at advancing social mobility. Announcements are made on the foundation's webpage, and publicised via press releases and social media.

We allow six weeks for applications, but we will close the application window sooner once we receive

sufficient quality applications. We are adopting this approach as we want to be fair and not take up charities' time applying to a fund with finite budgets.

We encourage applications from all sizes of charity.



Each application round defines very specific criteria, as well as general eligibility criteria:

- The charity must have been registered with the Charity Commission, the OSCR Scottish Charity Regulator or the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland for a minimum of one year and whose trustees' report and financial accounts have been filed on time.
- Alignment with our community investment policy.
- Projects must be local to one or more of our UK office locations or operating in England, Scotland, or Northern Ireland more broadly.
- Applications are not permitted for unrestricted funding requests.
- Unsolicited applications are not considered outside the open application window.

Almost £140,000 has been donated to date supporting three social mobility focused charities, namely EveryYouth (formerly End Youth Homelessness), Street League and Jericho (pictured). Each charity has published a one-year-on impact report on the Shoosmiths Foundation website detailing the impact of the funding.

While the foundation is primarily a grantmaking body, Shoosmiths LLP is keen to assist supported charities in additional ways.

To date, that support has included:

- Joint webinars to raise awareness of the work of the charities.
- Legal advice on a pro bono basis.
- Colleagues volunteering.
- Hosting meetings.
- Recorded interviews included in Shoosmiths' annual impact reports.

From our charity beneficiaries we seek innovative and impactful projects that can demonstrate clear outcomes including measurable reductions aligned with the relevant funding theme to which the calls relate. Advice we would offer to any charity considering applying:

- Carefully read the eligibility criteria and supporting material for the specific application window. Contact ShoosmithsFoundation@Shoosmiths.com with any questions.
- Understand how the call for projects is aligned with Shoosmiths' wider environment, social and governance strategy and commitments, and social mobility impact priorities.
- If an application misses the deadline, it will not be considered.
- Be clear how the impact of your project will be measured and reported. ■

£140k

donated to date

3

charities supported so far

£50k

maximum grant