

Community Business Trade Up 2023

Notes for Applicants



THE DULVERTON TRUST

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Supported by Power to Change and The Dulverton Trust, in partnership with the School for Social Entrepreneurs

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Programme overview

Do you lead an early-stage organisation which involves local people and meets local needs?

Do you want help and support to grow your organisation’s impact and develop its trading income?

The Community Business Trade Up Programme is for **early-stage community businesses** that are planning to grow their trading.

It is a **learning programme**, supporting you to develop new skills and get support from other community businesses, plus a **Match Trading grant of up to £5,000** which will challenge you to increase your trading.

Programme at a glance

Witness sessions

Entrepreneurs share their experiences and discuss the secrets of their success. You will be able to listen, learn and question them to help you examine and find meaning for your own project.

Expert sessions

Through questioning, observing and listening to experts, you will improve your abilities in financial management, income generation, business planning, sales and marketing, managing people, partnering and other essential skills.

Action learning sets

You will work in a small group with a trained facilitator, to help you find ways of overcoming the stumbling blocks, dilemmas and other problems that your project faces.

Mentoring

You will be matched with a mentor, who will help you build your confidence and understanding, and develop yourself and your project.

Peer support

You will bring your skills and experience to the group and learn from the skills and experience of the other members. This network of like-minded people will provide vital support to enable you to develop your enterprise.

Grants

A grant to help you get your project off the ground or to grow your organisation.



Match Trading Grant

Your organisation will also receive a **Match Trading grant** of up to £5,000. This grant is designed to challenge you to grow your trading income. Match Trading has been proven to increase trading income and boost organisations' resilience. Your community business will receive £1,000 up front, and then four instalments of up to £1,000 over the year matched against your increased trading. To claim the full grant, you will need to show that your trading income has increased by £5000 over the year.

Your grant can be used flexibly, helping you to attend the programme and to put your learning into practice by developing your trading and community business.

[Visit the Match Trading website for more details.](#)



Making an application

You must apply online by **12 Noon, Monday 26 June 2023.**

<https://www.the-sse.org/courses/community-business/>

You will need to provide:

- A copy of your most recent accounts, if you have them
- Your constitution if your organisation is unincorporated

Interview - If you are shortlisted, we will invite the lead applicant for an information session and an online interview in September.

Decision - We aim to make a final decision on places for the programme by late September and you will be informed as soon as possible. The programme starts at the beginning of November. [See programme dates.](#)

Support with applying

Questions: A downloadable set of application questions [here](#), with guidance and space for you to plan your answers and share these with others in your organisation. But you will need to apply using the online form. It is possible to upload voice recordings for the longer text questions, if you prefer.

Webinars: To find out more about the programme, help you understand the criteria and how to apply. [You can book onto a webinar.](#)

Helpdesk: Ask questions and get advice on completing your application. Contact the helpdesk at CBTU@sse.org.uk

One-to-one support: If you have difficulty filling in forms because of dyslexia, language or disability, or need one-to-one advice about applying, we have a limited number of one-to-one sessions available. Please contact the helpdesk if you need to access these.

Is my organisation eligible?

1. Working towards being a community business

Your organisation must be **committed to and working towards** meeting the Power to Change criteria for a community business. A community business is run by and for a local community for a social purpose. Its profits are reinvested for the benefit of that community. It must be aiming to be:

- **Locally rooted.** It should be based within a defined geographical area (e.g. a village or town, or a ward, or borough).
- **Accountable to the local community.** It must demonstrate that the local community is involved in planning and supporting the community business, as well as simply using its services.
- **Trading for the benefit of the local community.** It must be trading or planning to trade with profits reinvested in the community or to support activity in the community.
- **Making a broad community impact.** You may have a specific focus on a disadvantaged group, e.g. people from minoritised ethnicities or disabled people, if you are also supporting the local community more widely.

2. Early stage

Your community business must be **early stage**, with plans to grow its trading over the next year. You may have set up recently, or you may have been running your community business for several years at a low level, but are now ready to seek help to develop your business model and grow your trading. You are likely to have few or no paid staff, but with clear plans to grow over the next year.

3. Based in England

Your organisation must be based in England and working mainly in England.

4. Leadership team

You must have at least two people involved in leading your organisation, as board members, a steering group, a committee or as volunteer or paid leaders. We cannot accept applications from sole traders.

Please note that you must commit to having at least three unrelated board members (and no one person with more than 33% voting rights) by the end of the programme in October 2024.

5. Governing document

Your organisation must be currently active, and have a constitution, set of rules or legal structure. Your community business may be a registered charity, a Community Benefit Society (CBS) or a Community Interest Company (CIC).

We can also accept other companies, co-operative societies or unincorporated associations, if they have certain clauses in the governing document, specifically

- a) a social purposes or objects,
- b) a restriction on distribution of profits, which means that most or all of profits are returned for social purposes and
- c) an asset lock or winding up clause which means that if the organisation is wound up, its remaining assets go to a charity, CIC or other asset locked body.

6. Working towards our social impact goals

Your organisation must have social impact at its heart. By this we mean that it must be set up with the intention of making a difference locally through at least one of the following social impact goals:

- Increased employability
- Improved health and well-being
- Better access to services
- Reduced social isolation
- Improved environment
- Greater community cohesion
- Greater community pride and empowerment
- Economic regeneration
- Improving access to digital products or services
- Tackling racial injustices and inequity

7. Committed to learning

The lead applicant should be a leader in your organisation, with some strategic control, usually the CEO, the founder, or a board member. You must attend at least 80% of the course sessions. If you wish, you can also bring a second person from the community business to some of the learning programme sessions. This can be the same person each time, or different people depending on the learning session.

8. Bank Account

You must have a bank account in the legal name of your organisation managed by at least two unrelated people who release payments, or have this in place by the time we make the Grant Offer.

9. Other

All organisation leaders taking part in the programme must have the right to work in the UK and must be aged 16 or over by April 2023.

We cannot support activities that promote the advancement of religion or that are party political in nature. This does not prevent faith groups from applying for a community business which has a charitable purpose other than the advancement of religion.

Community Business Trade Up is run by the School for Social Entrepreneurs (SSE) with support from Power to Change and The Dulverton Trust. SSE offers action-based learning programmes to help people grow their social enterprises and community businesses. You can find out more about our work [here](#). [Power to Change](#) is the independent trust that supports community businesses in England. [The Dulverton Trust](#) is an independent grant-making charity, supporting UK charities tackling a range of social issues, protecting the natural world, and preserving heritage crafts.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can I apply if I already have a Power to Change grant or if I am currently on an SSE programme?

Do not apply if:

- Your organisation will be on another learning programme with SSE after October 2023.

You can apply if:

- You have attended previous SSE programmes.
- You have applied to SSE before and were unsuccessful.

2. Can we apply if our organisation has people that are connected to SSE, Power To Change or The Dulverton Trust?

If your organisation is run by people who regularly work for or are trustees of SSE, Power to Change, or The Dulverton Trust or have a close financial or family connection with our staff or trustees, please contact us before making an application to ensure that there is no conflict of interest.

3. What if we have particular needs, which may prevent us from fully taking part in the learning programme?

We are keen to enable people with disabilities and other access issues, to join our programmes. There is a separate small fund held by SSE to enable students who have particular needs to access the programme. This will be negotiated individually with participants. If you have specific needs and are concerned about this, please contact us to discuss.

4. What happens if my project will work with children under 18 or vulnerable adults?

You will be required to provide a Safeguarding Policy and may need enhanced DBS checks for staff and volunteers.

5. Where can I find out more about the time commitment and dates of delivery?

[Find out more about the learning programme including dates on which the programme will be delivered.](#)

6. How does Match Trading work?

[Visit the Match Trading website for more details.](#)

7. Can I apply for this programme if I have criminal convictions?

Previous SSE Fellows have included people who have criminal convictions, some of whom have used their experience in prisons to make a difference to the lives of ex-offenders. You do not need to let us know about previous convictions unless they are relevant to your application.

If you have unspent convictions for fraud or any convictions which may affect your ability to run your organisation, including working with children, young people or adults who are vulnerable, you must let us know, as we may undertake checks during the application assessment.

Data protection

SSE has a Privacy Policy which is available [here](#). SSE also has a [Data Protection Policy](#). We are committed to protecting your personal information and acting in accordance with your rights under the Data Protection Act 1998. We may need to share your information in order to undertake assessment of your application, statistical analysis, research and monitoring, compliance and regulatory reporting and fraud prevention. We may share your information

- with our funders
- with our agents or subcontractors for operational reasons

- with other agencies in order to assess your application
- with others for the purpose of compliance and regulatory reporting and to confirm your identity for money laundering purposes and fraud prevention
- if compelled to do so by law.

Equal Opportunities

SSE is committed to equal opportunities. We expect our staff, participants and grant recipients to comply with equal opportunities in any activities supported by SSE.

At the end of the application form we ask for you to complete an equal opportunities monitoring form about the person applying for this programme.

This will be used for statistical purposes and it will not form part of your application assessment. If you do not wish to provide the details requested, you have the option to opt out from providing this information.

Complaints

If you wish to make a complaint about any aspect of the running of the programme, SSE has a complaints procedure which is available [here](#).