



An £840,000 fund looking to improve charities’ digital services has opened for applications.

The Sector Challenge Programme will award grants of between £5,000 and £10,000 to charities working in four different cause areas: early years, mental health and wellbeing, sexual abuse and domestic violence, and financial wellbeing.

Funding comes from Catalyst, a network aiming to grow the sector’s digital capabilities, and from a partnership between The National Lottery Community Fund and Centre for The Acceleration of Social Technology (CAST).

The initiative is part of the £5m digital fund for charities announced by the three organisations in September.

Charities in the programme will be invited to form “clusters” – groups of three charities working in the same areas looking to address a specific issue. For example, one cluster will be looking at how to remotely support people who need to claim Universal Credit, while another one will aim to create a supportive online environment for staff and volunteers working at mental health charities.

Charities will work in partnership with digital agencies that will help them create the solutions they develop, and findings will be shared with the wider sector. Design charity Shift and digital cooperative DOT PROJECT will provide support to two cause areas each.

Grants are meant to pay for the staff time charities devote to the work. Charities of any size can apply as long as they have at least one paid member of staff.

Applications will be accepted on the Catalyst website until 27 November. Clusters will then work on their issues between 11 January and 26 March.

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