**Falkirk Digital Health and Care Fund: Application Guidance**

**Background**

A non-recuring budget of £250,000 is available to establish the Digital Health and Care Fund which will be targeted towards improving the use and availability of digital health and care technologies within Falkirk. The fund will be allocated by the Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership.

The funding programme has been developed and will be commissioned by representatives from health and social care and third sector who are part of the Digital Health and Care Programme Board.

Digital Health and Care refers to the integration of advanced technical solutions to enhance and support health and care services. By adopting approaches that make appropriate use of digital health and care technologies, services can leverage personalised and efficient care delivery, improve service user outcomes and empower individuals to actively participate in managing their health. The capture of data relevant to the service user’s needs enables more informed decision-making and proactive interactions.

Technology has become a supporting workstream within the [Falkirk Health & Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan 2023-2026](https://falkirkhscp.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/2023/04/Falkirk-HSCP-Strategic-Plan.pdf). The workstream has been implemented to ensure that the partnership use technology to explore new ways of helping people and to deliver services.

[Scotland’s Digital Health and Care Strategy](https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2021/10/scotlands-digital-health-care-strategy/documents/enabling-connecting-empowering-care-digital-age/enabling-connecting-empowering-care-digital-age/govscot%3Adocument/enabling-connecting-empowering-care-digital-age.pdf) sets out a vision to improve the care and wellbeing of people in Scotland by making best use of digital technologies in the design and delivery of services. This fund will help contribute towards the outcomes for technology as a supporting workstream and ensure technology is being used to help individuals and support the delivery of services.

 **Fund Outcomes**

The fund aims to develop and increase the in services within Falkirk, and support the implementation of technology as a supporting workstream within the Strategic Plan as well as the priorities set out in [Scotland’s Digital Health and Care Strategy.](https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2021/10/scotlands-digital-health-care-strategy/documents/enabling-connecting-empowering-care-digital-age/enabling-connecting-empowering-care-digital-age/govscot%3Adocument/enabling-connecting-empowering-care-digital-age.pdf)  The outcomes of the fund are directly aligned to the priorities of the [Falkirk Health & Social Care Partnership strategic Plan 2023-2026](https://falkirkhscp.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/2023/04/Falkirk-HSCP-Strategic-Plan.pdf) and therefore aim to use digital health and care technologies to achieve outcomes:

* Community based services are strengthened and supported through technology.
* Digital Health and Care Technologies provide access to the right care, at the right time, in the right place.
* Technology solutions focus on prevention, early intervention and minimising harm.
* Carers are supported in their caring role through the application of digital technologies.

**Fund Priorities**

To achieve the above outcomes, projects must support at least one of [Falkirk’s HSCP Strategic Plan](https://falkirkhscp.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/2023/04/Falkirk-HSCP-Strategic-Plan.pdf) Priorities, they are:

* Support and strengthen community based services.
* Ensure people can access the right care, at the right time, in the right place.
* Focus on prevention, early intervention and minimising harm.
* Ensure Carers are supported in their caring role.
* Supporting Workstreams: Workforce, technology, communication and engagement.

Projects must also support one of the priorities within Scotland’s [Digital Health & Care Strategy:](https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2021/10/scotlands-digital-health-care-strategy/documents/enabling-connecting-empowering-care-digital-age/enabling-connecting-empowering-care-digital-age/govscot%3Adocument/enabling-connecting-empowering-care-digital-age.pdf)

* Digital Access: People have flexible digital access to information, their own data and services which support their health and wellbeing, wherever they are.
* Digital skills and leadership: Digital skills are seen as core skills for the workforce across the health and care sector.
* Digital services: Digital options are increasingly available as a choice for people accessing services and staff delivering them.
* Digital futures: Our wellbeing and economy benefits as Scotland remains at the heart of digital innovation and development.
* Data-driven services and insight: Data is harnessed to the benefit of citizens, services and innovation.
* Digital foundations: The infrastructure, systems, regulation, standards, and governance are in place to ensure robust and secure delivery.

Applicants must support at least one or more of the above priorities

Further to the above priorities, the findings of a consultation exercise identified an equality issue relating to the use of technology. Older people who experience barriers to accessing internet-based services must have alternative ways to access services. Applicants will be asked how their projects will address this key equality issue.

 **Basic Eligibility Criteria**

* Applications can be accepted from a range of statutory services, third sector and constituted community groups to either start a new activity or extend existing activity which supports improving the use and availability of digital health and care technologies. Projects can apply for up to £25,000 single year, one-off payments.

The Digital Health and Care Programme Board may commission and allocate funds to projects identified through Programme activity and evidence of local need. Such projects will go through the same governance processes as set out within this document.

Funds CANNOT be used for:

* Un-constituted groups
* The sole benefit of one individual
* Private companies or sole traders
* Activities promoting religious or political beliefs
* Activities supporting people not resident or employed within the Falkirk Local Authority area
* Replacing Statutory Funding

 **Application Process**

Funding proposals will be assessed by a Commissioning group of representatives from Falkirk HSCP and third sector on behalf of the Digital Health & Care Programme Board. This Board will review and make funding recommendations to the Falkirk HSCP Senior Leadership Team who will make final award decisions.

Applications will be assessed on own merit, regardless of applicant i.e., no priority will be applied to either statutory or third sector applications.

**Programme Schedule**

The programme is open-ended from 1st April 2024 – 31st March 2027 or until funds are exhausted, with no deadline for applications. However, the £250,000 funding is notionally allocated as follows:

* Year 1 (April 2024 to March 2025) £90,000
* Year 2 (April 2025 to March 2026) £80,000
* Year 3 (April 2026 to March 2027) £80,000

This structured approach aims to facilitate effective planning and implementation of projects supported by the fund by 1 April 2027

Applicants can choose between small grants of up to £5,000 and larger grants up to £25,000. Small grant recipients, such as those purchasing digital health and care equipment will contribute to an end of award report evaluating the impact of the funded project. Large grant recipients will submit quarterly reports (see below).

Applicants will be asked to demonstrate sustainability and future funding needs. For those seeking continued funding in year 2 and/or 3, applicants can reapply yearly until the fund closes. Projects will be evaluated yearly based on evidence of impact.

While matched funding is not mandatory, its presence in applications is considered during the assessment process, reflecting a commitment to additional financial support.

The Digital Health and Care Fund maintains a pragmatic and businesslike approach, emphasising responsible allocation and reasonable expectations for project outcomes.

Applications will be assessed on their own merit, regardless of applicant i.e., no priority will be applied to either statutory or third sector applications.

 **Monitoring & Evaluation**

As a condition of your award, small grants (up to £5k) will be required to submit an end of year (or project) award report. A proforma will be provided to successful applicants.

Grants awarded above £5k are required to submit quarterly monitoring reports including the following:

* A brief description of the project and the main activities delivered.
* A description of how the project outcomes have been met and how these project outcomes contribute to the outcomes of the Fund.
* Details of financial spend, including any underspend.
* Details of any challenges faced or changes to the project.
* Qualitive and quantitative information on number and types of people who benefited, including snapshots or case studies.

 **How to Apply**

Please complete the application form and submit your proposal along with any supporting documents via email to: integration@falkirk.gov.uk.

If you have any questions regarding the application process, please contact james.spence@falkirk.gov.uk