**Ahead of The Game - Sport and Mental Health: Stage 1 guidance**

Comic Relief’s Sport for Change strategy aims to bring about positive social change for individuals and communities through the intentional use of sport and physical activity.

Please find the guidance for the **Ahead of The Game - Sport and Mental Health** funding call below. Please read the information on the Comic Relief [website](https://www.comicrelief.com/funding/funding-opportunities) before starting an application and in conjunction with this guidance. Please read this guidance carefully and be sure the answers you give clearly address the key points these questions are seeking to draw out from your response.   
  
**Some questions in the form will be marked as not applicable as they are not relevant to your funding initiative or proposal, and you are not required to complete these.**

The online form automatically saves your answers as you move between sections. However, you can also choose to save your work using the save button at the end of each section. You can leave the form and return to add more information at a different time. The answers to some questions will determine whether you are subsequently asked additional questions. To make sure you supply us with the answers to all required questions you should complete the questions and sections in order.

Before you can submit your proposal successfully, our system checks whether you have completed all mandatory sections and questions. The system will flag any unanswered questions to you. You can print a copy of your proposal at any time using the print form options at the top of this page and at the top of each section.

We recommend you use Mozilla Firefox or Google Chrome browser to complete this form.

Please note that there are character limits for the answers to some questions; where relevant you can find these on the online form and they are also noted in the guidance below in the final column.

**The deadline for first stage applications is 1200 GMT on Friday 31st May 2019.**

**PLEASE NOTE THAT ORGANISATIONS CANNOT SUBMIT AN APPLICATION TO THIS FUND AS WELL AS TO THE “BRIDGING THE GAPS: WORKING TOGETHER TO STRENGTHEN MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE” FUND THAT WILL BE OPEN FOR APPLICATIONS FROM THE 6TH May 2019. YOU CAN ONLY SUBMIT AN APPLICATION TO ONE OF THE FUNDING CALLS.**

There is a growing body of evidence that suggests that mental health can be improved through sports based approaches which combine sport or physical activity with quality mental health support. However, this needs to be intentional. Research shows that taking part in any sport or physical activity will not automatically, on its own, positively benefit someone’s mental health. Programmes aiming to use sport or physical activity to support those with mental health problems need to be carefully designed to ensure they provide adequate support and are effective.

Comic Relief defines Sport for Change as bringing about positive social change for individuals and communities through the intentional use of sport and physical activity. Proposals to this initiative will need to evidence social outcomes and not just focus on increasing participation in sport. [Click here](https://www.comicrelief.com/sites/default/files/downloads/sport_for_change_booklet.pdf) for more information.

We define sports based approaches as programmes which combine a sport for change approach with specific therapeutic elements, and that have access to mental health expertise.

**What we will fund:**

* Funding is available for a minimum of 3 years and a maximum of 5 years
* Applications are welcome for £150,000 to £450,000
* Projects must be delivered in the UK, Ghana, Rwanda or Uganda
* To help organisations ensure they request the full cost of delivering a service or project, we are happy for organisations to include [full cost recovery](https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/organisation/financial-management/planning-and-budgeting/project-budgeting-and-full-cost-recovery).

**Who can apply?**

* Proposals can be made by single applicants, or by organisations working in partnership
* Organisations can only submit one proposal as the lead organisation (though they can be named as partners on any number of applications).
* The applicant **must not** have an annual income of more than £10 million
* The applicant **must** have an annual income of at least £75,000
* The requested amount must be proportionate to the annual income of your organisation, and this will be looked at as part of the assessment process. We aim to fund no more than 40% of your organisation's total income in any one year.

## 1. Basic details

| **Subsection** | **Question** | **Guidance** | **Character count** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1.1 Reference information | **Reference information** | The proposal ID is generated when you create a proposal. You should use this proposal ID in all correspondence relating to your proposal. | n/a |
| 1.2 Basic details | **Proposal title** | Please provide a brief title for your proposal, excluding your organisation name. We will use this title whenever we refer to your proposal. | 100 characters |
| 1.2 Basic details | **Has this work previously been funded by Comic Relief?** | Please tick yes if Comic Relief has previously provided funding for this work.  Please note that if we have previously funded this work, you will be asked to upload the latest report of this work or any final evaluation you might have carried out. | n/a |
| 1.2 Basic details | **Has this work previously been funded by another funder (not Comic Relief)?** | Please tick yes if this work has previously been funded by another funder.  Please note that if the work has been previously funded, you will be asked to upload latest report of this work or any final evaluation you might have carried out. | n/a |
| 1.2 Basic details | **Are you using any of the following approaches in your proposal:**  Sport for Change  Tech for Good  Enterprise | **Sport for Change must be selected here. Do not select either of the other options.**  **Guidance on proposals involving Sport for Change**  By Sport for Change, we mean projects that aim to bring about positive social change for individuals and communities through the intentional use of sport and physical activity. Please [see here](https://www.comicrelief.com/sites/default/files/downloads/sport_for_change_booklet.pdf) for more information.  We cannot fund projects which aim only to increase participation in sport, projects aiming to develop sporting excellence, individual athletes or sports teams or one-off sporting events. Refurbishment, upgrades to playing surfaces, or any other capital works associated with sporting provision will also not be funded. You will be asked additional questions about your approach in section 2. | n/a |
| 1.2 Basic details | **Please select the programme area(s) to which your proposal best fits. For more information about our programme areas, and our priorities within these programme areas, please visit our website.** | Please select Global Mental Health. |  |
| 1.2 Basic details | **Are you working with partner organisations that will be responsible for managing a share of the project budget?** | Partners are defined as organisations that will be responsible for managing a share of the project budget.  Please also note that if you are working with any government organisations, they should not be in receipt of any Comic Relief funds. | n/a |
| 1.3 not applicable |  |  |  |

## 2. Your Proposal

This section is for you to give us more detail on your proposal.

Please note that some questions in the form will be marked as not applicable as they are not relevant to your launch initiative or proposal, and you are not required to complete these.

| **Subsection** | **Question** | **Guidance** | **Character count** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2.1 Change | **Please provide a brief summary of your proposal** | Please give us a clear 2-3 sentence proposal description here. We want to get a clear idea of the essence of your work, including the overall change(s) you are intending to achieve and who will benefit. Please be clear and concise and avoid the use of jargon. We do not need a detailed list of activities in this question or a description of the context. | 350 characters |
| 2.1 Change | **If you want to, you can include a link to a 2 minute video summarising what you want us to fund** | This is totally optional and it will not disadvantage you if you do not supply a video.  You should not attach the actual video file, but a link to YouTube, vimeo or another online platform where your video can be accessed. Please do not password protect the video. We reserve the right to not accept proposals where the video has been password protected.  The film should be a maximum of 2 minutes long. Don’t send us longer films, as they won’t be watched. The content of the film is more important than the quality. We are very happy with films created on phones, or using basic software.  Please note this should not be a generic video about your organisation’s work, but one which specifically tells us about how you wold use this funding. Films should:   * State the name of the organisation (and any partners) and give a brief summary of what the work will involve * Describe how you’ll go about the work and what it will achieve. |  |
| 2.1 Change | **Please describe the people who would benefit and the problems they face in their lives** | We want to know who the people are who will benefit from your work (your main target groups or beneficiaries). Tell us where they live and what problems or challenges they face, and explain a little about the context in which they are living. Your explanation should help us see the need for your work.  You could describe the major factors – people and relationships, systems and structures, policies and processes – that are influencing the lives of these people, and the ways in which these factors are impacting on them. Please use relevant and up to date evidence where relevant.  Please note that this for fund there are different target groups for work in the UK and for work internationally.  In Ghana, Uganda and Rwanda, we understand that mental health problems may be more difficult to recognise and diagnose often as a result of stigma and discrimination as well as lower availability of and access to mental health services. We will therefore support the following in these countries:   * Organisations to deliver sport-based programmes in communities where they can demonstrate people are at high risk of developing mental health problems. * Organisations to deliver sport-based programmes who are working with those already experiencing mental health problems.   In the UK it will focus on funding organisations to use sport-based approaches to support people who are already experiencing mental health difficulties, whether these are self-determined or diagnosed. | 3500 characters |
| 2.1 Change | **What changes do you expect to see as result of your proposed work?** | Tell us what changes you are aiming to bring about (i.e. your outcomes) for the people described in the previous question.  We want to know in what way the activities or service you want to provide will bring about change for the better in the lives of the people who you work with.  Depending on the kind of work you do these changes could be for individuals, communities or organisations and could be about changes in capacity, attitudes, behaviour, structures, services, or policies. | 3500 characters |
| 2.2 People benefitting | **People benefitting directly**  Core target groups  Frontline workers  Other groups benefitting directly | Comic Relief is asking you to provide further detail about the people who will benefit directly from your work in this way because we have to make sure that the data we report back to the public accurately shows what has been achieved and with whom. We know that this may not be the usual way in which you break down your people benefitting data and so we have written detailed guidance to help you answer this question. Please read the information below before completing your answers.  Comic Relief only asks about the numbers of direct beneficiaries from your proposed activity. By this we mean people who would be directly involved in the activities and who you would be able to show (through the data that you would be collecting) have experienced a change by being involved in this work.  When calculating the number of people benefitting directly you should be realistic about what change you think is feasible over the time span and activities you are proposing. Very often applications are overly ambitious in the numbers they estimate would benefit directly – we would prefer you to provide more realistic and accurate numbers (even if that means smaller numbers) than over-estimated, exaggerated numbers that you will have no way of evidencing from your proposal. We will review these figures and how realistic they are as part of the assessment process.  It is perfectly acceptable to have ‘0’ in any of the categories of people benefitting directly – the categories you use will depend on the type of activities and changes you want to see.  By core target groups we mean the main groups of people your proposal focusses on. They will directly benefit from an activity and are typically involved on a one-to-one or group basis i.e. they have an intensive and/or regular involvement with activities. For example these might be survivors of domestic violence supported through services, young people supported to complete their education, or people supported through skills and services to improve their financial situation.  By frontline workers we mean people who will actively take part in interventions because they work with or support the core target group(s), whether in a paid or voluntary capacity, e.g. counsellors, health workers, teachers. They will generally be given training, support or other forms of guidance to enable them to support those from the core target group(s).  By other people benefiting directly we mean people who will benefit from a one-off, initial or limited involvement with activities. They are likely to be from broader groups that you would be interacting with (community members, parents etc.), but, if you are claiming them as beneficiaries, we would still expect you to be collecting data to evidence the benefit you expect them to have gained from being involved with your work. For example you should not just include whole communities that have received a leaflet or who might have attended an event unless you have some way of gathering data that that involvement has resulted in change for all of these people. (This may not be feasible to do or it may not be a core focus of what your proposed activity is aiming to achieve – in which case you do not need to include those people in the beneficiary table).  You should also not include those who are assumed to benefit purely because of their relationship with someone who is directly benefitting, e.g. the family members of a person directly benefitting. For work influencing policy change, where you can show that the policy change has actually impacted on specific groups of people, then these people can be included under ‘other groups benefitting directly’. However, if people are only assumed to benefit from the policy change and this cannot be tracked in any meaningful way, then these people should not be included. We expect that the numbers of other groups benefitting directly will often be estimated. | 150 characters |
| 2.3 Activities | **What specifically will you do to help people to address their identified problems?** | For this question, we want to know about the activities you will be carrying out to help the people you are trying to reach. Be clear and precise, explaining the number/frequency of different activities where relevant.  How will a typical participant interact with your project? Describe the journey you anticipate a beneficiary to take from when they first hear about your work right through to engagement, what a typical day/session will look like, and any follow-on support/referral they may receive (if applicable).  Think about the how, what, where and when of your work. We would expect you to develop a project plan prior to the delivery of the work for your own purposes, so tell us about the activities that will be on that project plan. Activities can vary from workshops, 1:1 support sessions, research, developing and improving services or products, community awareness raising and mobilisation, training e.g. of teachers or health staff, campaigning and policy influencing etc.  Please note as per the initiative page on the website, sport for change must form part of your programme activity, and we will not fund one off interventions or one off community events that do not form part of a wider programme. | 3500 characters |
| 2.3 Activities | **Why do you think this approach will be effective?** | Tell us why you think your approach and activities will result in the changes you want to achieve. On what basis did you choose the approach described in this application, i.e. what factors did you consider in coming to your decision? For example did you look at the evidence to support different approaches, and/or their relative cost-effectiveness? Are they tried and tested, or a new way of doing things? Does your organisation support any specific sector priorities or government policies and plans? Tell us about any research or consultation you may have done or any evidence or learning you have from previous projects, or from other similar activities carried out by others, to support the approach and activities you have chosen. |  |
| 2.3 Activities | **What market analysis has been carried out and what are the key opportunities and challenges it has highlighted?**   |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | **Not applicable for Sport for Change applications.** | 2100 characters |
| 2.3 Activities | **Why do you think that this technology is the best means of addressing the need?** | **Not applicable for Sport for Change applications.** | 2100 characters |
| 2.3 Activities | **How will sport be used to help deliver the changes that you are seeking to bring about?** | **All applications to this initiative must be using sport. Please make sure you have indicated that your project is taking a Sport for Change approach in section 1.**  For this question, please consider in your response:  1. Why you have chosen the particular sport(s) and what value sport brings to the work.  2. The broader programme of work that will take place and how sport will be integrated;  3. How you will engage the participants into the project (open access, targeted approach referrals etc.)?  4. How you will measure the change delivered by the work?  You could also talk about other similar approaches that have been used in your area to impact upon mental health through sport (by you or others) and what have you learned from these? These may not be formal partners but may provide opportunities for sharing learning/cross-referral/follow-on support.  **Please see Appendix 1 at the end of this document for some additional guidance on the use of sport.**  Please note that we cannot fund projects which aim only to increase participation in sport, projects aiming to develop sporting excellence, individual athletes or sports teams or one-off sporting events. Refurbishment, upgrades to playing surfaces, or any other capital works associated with sporting provision will also not be funded. | 2100 characters |
| 2.3 Activities | **Who will be involved in delivering the work and what will they do?** | Tell us more about the different organisations involved in the work and their respective roles and responsibilities. We want to know who will be delivering the activities you have described above in order to have a better understanding of how the funding will be managed and how you will successfully deliver the changes you want to achieve. Your answer should include any partners named in your application (i.e. those organisations managing budget), but may also include other organisations involved but not in direct receipt of Comic Relief funding (e.g. consultancies, contractors) | 2100 characters |
| 2.4 not applicable |  |  |  |
| 2.5 not applicable |  |  |  |
| 2.6 not applicable |  |  |  |

## 3. Your funding request

This section is for you to tell us what you are requesting from Comic Relief. **Please note that some questions in the form will be marked as not applicable as they are not relevant to your launch initiative or proposal, and you are not required to complete these.**

| **Subsection** | **Question** | **Guidance** | **Character count** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 3.1 Where the work is taking place | **Where are you requesting funding for?** | Please tell us where your work will be taking place. Please click on the arrows to expand the list and click on every level that applies, e.g. if the work will take place in Nairobi, tick ‘Africa, South of Sahara’, ‘Kenya’ and ‘Nairobi’, or if the work will take place in Yorkshire, tick ‘United Kingdom’, ‘England’ and ‘Yorkshire and the Humber’.  For UK activity, we would like to know the region as well as the country in which the work will take place.  For International activity, we would like to know the country, and region if possible. Use the arrows to expand the list and select the region/country once revealed.  **For this initiative, projects must be delivered in the UK, Ghana, Rwanda or Uganda.** | n/a |
| 3.1 Where the work is taking place | **For international work please give the district(s). Please separate with a comma if there is more than one** | Use the District space to tell us the districts in which the work will take place, and separate your answers by commas. |  |
| 3.1 Where the work is taking place | **For UK work, please give up to four main location postcode/s (unless the work is being delivered entirely online)** | If your proposal is for work in the UK, please specify postcodes which best reflect the locations and characteristics of the areas you will work in. This should be the full postcode, such as SE1 7TP, rather than SE1. If your project delivers work across a locality, city or county, please provide postcodes within these which best represents the range of locations you work across. We use this information to understand the characteristics of the locations where you are working, such as whether it is urban or rural, its level of deprivation or where there are gaps in similar services. We also review the locations of all our applicants to understand where we are attracting applications from. You do not need to answer this question if all aspects of this project are delivered online. | n/a |
| 3.1 Your funding request | **How long would you like a grant to last?** | Select the expected duration of your project from the drop-down list.  **Project duration should be a minimum of 36 months (3 years) and maximum of 60 months (5 years).** | n/a |
| 3.2 Your concept note request | **Your concept note request** | Please tell us the total cost of the work each year, and the amount requested from Comic Relief. |  |
| 3.3 not applicable |  |  | n/a |
| 3.3 not applicable |  |  |  |
| 3.4 not applicable |  |  |  |
| 3.5 not applicable |  |  |  |
| 3.6 Expenditure by organisation | **Expenditure by organisation** | This question will only appear if you indicated in section 1 that you are working with partners to deliver your project. Please tell us how much money each partner is responsible for – both the total amount and the amount of the Comic Relief grant broken down by year. | n/a |
| 3.7 not applicable |  |  |  |

## 4. **Your organisation**

This section is for you to tell us more about your organisation.

| **Subsection** | **Question** | **Guidance** | **Character count** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 4.1 Your organisation | **What is the purpose of your organisation and what are you most proud of in your history? Why is your organisation well placed to carry out this work?** | Tell us about your organisation – what you do, who you work with, where you work. Provide information about your experience in working with the people you want to help, and the problems they are dealing with. We also want to know what you’re most proud of in terms of your organisation’s achievements and why you think your organisation will be able to manage and deliver your project.  Alternatively, you can upload a video in the next question if preferable. | 2100 characters |
| 4.1 Your organisation | **Date your organisation was established** | Please enter the date your organisation was established. If you do not know the exact date your organisation was established, please give an approximate date. | n/a |
| 4.1 Your organisation | **Legal status** | Please select your organisation’s legal status from the drop-down list and complete registration number details if applicable. Please make sure you check our [policy](http://www.comicrelief.com/grants/policies) regarding eligibility and any specific eligibility for the programme under which you are applying. | n/a |
| 4.1 Your organisation | **Is your organisation affiliated with any other organisation?** | If you answer yes, you will be asked to enter the name of the organisation(s) to which it is affiliated. By affiliated, we mean any organisation with which you are legally connected, such as a sister or parent organisation. |  |
| 4.1 Your organisation | **How many people work for your organisation?**  Paid staff (full-time equivalent)  Part-time paid staff  Sessional paid staff  Volunteers (full-time equivalent) | We define ‘full time equivalent’ as 35 hours per week. |  |
| 4.2 Your organisation’s finance | **What was your organisation’s income in your most recent full financial year?** | Please provide us with your organisation’s income for your most recent full financial year. This will help to give us an idea of the scale of your organisation. We will ask for more information in the full proposal if you are invited to the next stage. | n/a |
| 4.3 not applicable |  |  |  |
| 4.4 not applicable |  |  |  |
| 4.5 not applicable |  |  |  |
| 4.6 not applicable |  |  |  |
| 4.7 not applicable |  |  |  |
| 4.8 not applicable |  |  |  |
| 4.9 not applicable |  |  |  |
| 4.10 not applicable |  |  |  |

## 5. **Your partner**

If you are working with a partner organisation/s who are managing part of the budget, this section is for you to tell us more about them. If you are not working with partner organisations, then this section is not applicable to you.

**Please note that some questions in the form will be marked as not applicable as they are not relevant to your launch initiative or proposal, and you are not required to complete these.**

| **Subsection** | **Question** | **Guidance** | **Character count** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 5.1. Basic Partner details | **Partner name** | If your organisation is already linked to a partner organisation on our system you will see them in the drop-down menu; please select their name from here. If it is not, please click 'Add a partner to this list' and follow the on-screen instructions to search for the organisation, or create as a new organisation record if they are not already registered with us.  To remind you, partners are defined as organisations that will be responsible for managing a share of the project budget. Please do not include small community based organisations, community health structures, savings groups etc. unless they are responsible for managing part of the project’s budget. Please also note that if you are working with any government organisations, they should not be in receipt of any Comic Relief funds. | n/a |
| 5.1. Basic Partner details | **What is the purpose of this organisation and what is it most proud of in its history? Why is this organisation best placed to carry out this work?** | Once you have added the name of your partner organisation, you will be asked this question for each one.  Please provide us with some more information about your partner organisation – what they do, who they work with, where they work. Provide information about their experience in working with the people you want to help, and the problems they are dealing with. We also want to know what they are most proud of in terms of their organisation’s achievements and why this partner organisation will be able to help you deliver your project.  Alternatively, you can upload a video in the next question if preferable. | 2100 characters |
| 5.1. Basic Partner details | **Alternatively, you may provide a link to a 3 minute video answering these questions** | Instead of answering the previous question, you can provide us with a link to a three minute video which explains the purpose of your partner organisation, what they are most proud of in their organisation’s history and why you think this organisation is best placed to help you deliver the project. You should not attach the actual video file, but a link to YouTube or another online platform where your video can be accessed. Please note this should not be a generic video about your partner’s work, but one which answers the specific questions asked in the previous question. | n/a |
| 5.1. Basic Partner details | **This partner organisation’s legal status** | Please select your partner organisation’s legal status from the drop-down list. | n/a |
| 5.1. Basic Partner details | **How many people work for this organisation?**  Full-time equivalent  Part-time equivalent  Sessional workers  Volunteers | We define ‘full time equivalent’ as 35 hours per week. | n/a |
| 5.2. not applicable | not applicable |  |  |
| 5.3. Partner finances | **What was this organisation’s income in their most recent full financial year?** | Please provide us with your partner organisation’s income for their most recent full financial year. | n/a |
| 5.4. not applicable |  |  |  |
| 5.5. not applicable |  |  |  |
| 5.6. not applicable |  |  |  |
|  | **Add Partner** | You can add additional partners by clicking on ‘Add partner’. You will be asked the same questions as above for each partner. | n/a |

## 6. **Declaration and Contact details**

| **Subsection** | **Question** | **Guidance** | **Character count** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 6.1 Contact details | **If your contact details below have changed, please update in the 'Contacts' section before you submit this proposal**  First name  Last name  Email address  Telephone number | These will pull through based on the name of the person who created the proposal, who is now the application contact.  If these details have changed, you should go to the Contacts tab on your GEM dashboard and amend the details there before submitting this proposal. | n/a |
| 6.2 Declaration | **Authority to submit** | Please tick to confirm you have authority to submit this proposal on behalf of the applicant organisation. | n/a |
| 6.2 Declaration | **Terms and conditions** | Please tick to confirm you have read and accepted the terms and conditions of making a grant proposal to Comic Relief. It is important to take the time to read these to fully understand what to expect from Comic Relief once a proposal has been submitted. | n/a |
| 6.2 Declaration | **Data protection** | Please tick to confirm you have understood how Comic Relief will share personal data.  Please note proposals cannot be submitted unless these tickboxes have been checked. | n/a |

**Appendix 1 – Important considerations when designing a sport for mental health project**

There are some key considerations for designing a sport for mental health programme to ensure it has the greatest possible impact:

**Social support**

Social support is a person’s perception that they are cared for and that they know people who can help them. It’s an important component of wellbeing, and our research has suggested that programmes that increase participants’ perception of social support are likely to be more successful in improving wellbeing and mental health.

**Self-esteem**

Self-esteem is a person's overall sense of self-worth. Another important component of wellbeing, our research suggested that physical activity can boost self-esteem by giving participants the sense that they had achieved something through participation. Improving skills can also give participants a sense of mastery, and improved perceptions of their competence, physical skills and physical self.

**Positive physical experience**

Getting active can give participants a sense of physical wellbeing, and a level of absorption which provides a break from habitual thought patterns. Programmes that provide a significant, while manageable, level of challenge, fun and attention deliver best on this mechanism.

**Duration of the engagement with beneficiaries**

In setting up interventions where a key criterion for success is building social connections, it is important that sustainability is considered so that participants don’t feel dropped. Individuals need to be able to access programmes for a long enough duration for social connections to be formed and their benefits to be realised. This means that active involvement over 1 year is likely to be much more beneficial to individuals than involvement over 10 weeks. Availability of some form of support beyond this initial time period is also important to ensure that these benefits are maintained. This might mean there being access to a skeleton version of the programme, the facilitation of a self-run group or signposting on to other services offering support. Co-produced interventions are much more likely to be owned by and embedded in communities and therefore be sustained by them. Building partnerships and local capacity will also help to ensure a lasting legacy.

**Develop a clear theory of change for the project**

Applicants need to clearly understand the chain of cause and effect by which they intend their intervention to support mental health.

Applications should therefore demonstrate how projects will contribute to key outcomes that support wellbeing, such as:

* Helping people develop trusting relationships with others that give them a sense of social support
* Building people’s self-efficacy, including through enabling them to experience skill progression
* Facilitating broader social support and a sense of belonging to a group
* Signposting people to services that can provide complementary or more in-depth help.

**Mental expertise on the project**

In order for mental health to be considered intentionally there needs to be genuine mental health expertise available within the programme team. Partnership working should be considered where necessary; to ensure that there is access to mental health expertise.

**The type of sport to be used**

Some types of sport have greater potential to contribute to improving mental health than others.

Applicants will need to consider how the type of sport chosen will contribute to improving mental health. Our research and consultation for this fund suggested that the following attributes around the use of sport increase the likelihood that a sports programme will be beneficial to mental health:

* Focus on effort over success
* Sports which facilitate a sense of individual mastery e.g. yoga, surfing, skate boarding etc. can be highly beneficial.
* Provide additional time and space to foster social connections before/after the sport activities
* The sport should be inclusive - across genders in particular
* The sport or physical activity should be fun and engaging for the target demographic
* Provide space for unstructured play (to relevant age groups)
* The sport should be accessible

**Quality and support of delivery staff**

The quality of delivery staff is key to the effectiveness of any sport for change project that supports people with mental health issues. This is because the social dimension of sport programmes is a central component of their effect on mental health, and the relationship formed with the programme leaders is a particularly important part of this, at least initially.

Because delivery staff are so central to successful programmes, it’s important to have processes in place to ensure that suitable staff are employed. Delivery staff need to:

* Understand the purpose of the programme and the needs of the participants
* Be able to talk about their feelings with participants
* Not have prejudices that affect their role
* Understand that their role is about support
* Be supported with their own wellbeing

There need to be screening and training processes to ensure that these factors are in place. Peer support can also be successful but again requires training and support.

**Appendix 2 - Examples of risk factors for mental ill health (relevant for projects working in Ghana, Rwanda or Uganda)**

* Stressful and/or traumatic events or environment
* Exposure to and/or displacement by war and conflict
* Belonging to a minority group
* Lower socioeconomic status
* Dangerous living conditions
* Discrimination and social exclusion
* Mental health stigma
* Social and gender inequalities
* Social isolation
* Violence and abuse
* Substance use
* Unemployment or job insecurity