

Minor Repairs and Improvements Grant: An Eligibility and Assessment Guide

Eligibility

Eligible buildings

Church of England consecrated church buildings and licensed places of worship (including those which are the subject of sharing agreements or ecumenical partnerships) in the Diocese of York.

The 'building' extends to its below-ground drainage system, foundations and immediate curtilage.

Ineligible buildings

Other buildings or structures in the churchyard or curtilage of eligible buildings which are not in ecclesiastical use.

Cathedrals; churches and chapels which are the responsibility of private owners or institutions.

Non-Anglican places of worship; closed and closing churches.

Eligible work

- Minor repairs not more than £20k (or £24k for unlisted buildings) and not part of a larger project.
- Repair of building fabric (external): roof coverings, roof structure, walls, parapets, pinnacles and other architectural features, towers, spires, windows, doors, rainwater disposal system (including below-ground drainage).
- Repair of building fabric (internal): ceilings, walls and wall linings (plaster/panelling but not Wall paintings, mosaics etc), floors, doors.
- Repair of building services installations where essential for health and safety and/or continuity of worship and mission use.
- Emergency repairs or holding works, eg propping, covering, protection etc.

To be eligible, any such work must be recommended in the most recent QI report (or subsequent professional report or condition survey etc). Work classified as urgent (either category 1 - Urgent, requiring immediate attention; 2 - Requires attention within 12 months; or 3 - Requires attention within the next 12 - 24 months) should take priority but any work required within the quinquennium is eligible. Works of differing urgency within that definition may be undertaken together for the sake of efficiency and economy, especially where 'stitch in time' repairs can save money in the long term.

Improvements

- Additions, alterations or adaptations specifically to overcome building design defects or obsolescence (e.g. undersized hoppers or drainpipes) or to improve access for maintenance.
- Additions, alterations or adaptations where essential to improve physical access, e.g. handrails, ramps etc.

- Improvements to building services installations where essential to sustain worship and mission use, such as improvements to heating, lighting, wiring, kitchens, WCs. Where necessary, this might include the installation or upgrading of pipework or cabling to the perimeter of the churchyard or curtilage.
- New installations or improvements to existing installations for digital connectivity, whether through a wired connection or 4G/5G mobile WiFi, where essential to sustain worship and mission use.
- Bat mitigation measures, including relevant ecologists' fees, where the presence of bats is a barrier to worship and mission use. A one-off deep clean can be an eligible cost as part of a mitigation plan.

Other eligible costs

- Professional fees to design, specify, inspect and certify the work.
- VAT (for unlisted churches and work to listed churches which falls outside the eligibility of the Listed Places of Worship (LPW) grant scheme). It will be assumed that PCCs will apply to the LPW grant scheme wherever possible.

Ineligible work

- Routine maintenance (NB this is not to downgrade the importance of maintenance, which is an essential part of the management of the church building).
- Routine cleaning
- Work to furnishings, such as bells and bell frames, books and manuscripts, church plate, clocks, monumental brasses and decorative metalwork, monuments, organs, paintings and wall paintings, stained glass, textiles, wooden objects. These may qualify for the grants administered by the Church Buildings Council.
- Conservation reports. These may qualify for the grants administered by the Church Buildings Council
- Routine inspection (QIs, periodic inspection of electrical installation, appliance testing, gas safety check, etc).
- Routine servicing of building services installations.
- Any work covered by insurance.

Assessment and required documentation

A grants committee has been established comprising the Archdeacons, DAC members and church buildings staff to assess the applications against the eligibility criteria detailed above.

The appropriate level of grant will be assessed consistently according to the indices of multiple deprivation by ecclesiastical parish as shown in the Church of England Parish Map - <https://www.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=67bce0ed36dd4ee0af7a16bc079aa09a#>

The following scale for grant rates will be used:

- Deprivation rank 6,236 to 12,307 – grant @ 50%
- Deprivation rank 5,012 to 6,235 – grant @ 60%
- Deprivation rank 3,812 to 5,011 – grant @ 70%

- Deprivation rank 2,558 to 3,811 – grant @ 80%
- Deprivation rank 1,232 to 2,557 – grant @ 90%
- Deprivation rank 1 to 1,231 – grant @ 90%

Grant offers will be made with the following conditions. Please make sure you can fulfil the conditions before applying.

- The offer of a grant from the Fund will not remove the requirement for the PCC obtain faculty or approval under list B, as necessary, or any other necessary permission before the work goes ahead. The offer of a grant does not imply support for the proposal for the purposes of faculty or any other approval and does not indicate that permission will be forthcoming.
- Work must not begin until the diocese has approved the scope, methodology and estimated costs of the work and made an offer in writing which the PCC has accepted.
- Work carried out before a grant is offered is ineligible.
- Work costing more than £1,000 will need to be subject to some form of competitive procurement (normally by obtaining itemised quotations for comparison) on a best value basis. A full competitive tender exercise will not be required unless the nature of the work or other factors make it necessary.
- Work will need to be carried out, paid for and claimed within a year of the offer date or by 31 December 2025, whichever is the sooner.
- The diocese reserves the right to cancel grants towards projects not implemented within the timescale above.
- Grants are a restricted fund item for the purposes of PCC accounting and must be spent on the agreed work. The diocese reserves the right to claw back the grant if the work undertaken is not the work for which the grant was approved and/or any work or activity is removed from the project (and the diocese has not been informed in advance and approved any such change).
- The diocese reserves the right to withhold or recover the grant in part or in full if the work is not carried out in accordance with the agreed method statement or specification.
- Should the cost of the agreed work prove higher than estimated or quoted, the diocese is under no obligation to increase the grant, though it may do so at its own discretion.
- Grant recipients should retain relevant documentation relating to the grant and the work carried out for at least six years after the work is completed. The work should be recorded in the logbook. Documentation, including photographs, should be made available to the diocese on request.
- The dioceses reserves the right to publicise the grant and the project and to use relevant information in case studies, monitoring reports etc as it sees fit.

Please make sure you have included the following documentation when submitting your application.

1. An up to date Quinquennial Inspection Report if one hasn't already been sent to the diocese. The grant cannot be offered to churches that do not have an up to date QI. If one is booked in, or you are awaiting the report from your architect, please stress to them the urgency of getting the report asap due to the demand and funding deadlines.

2. An up to date set of accounts showing any restricted fabric funds. This grant is aimed towards those parishes that are struggling but all churches are invited to apply.
3. Competitive tenders or quotations for the work if over £1k.
4. Photographs of the works to be undertaken
5. An explanation of the works if they are to be improvements and how the improvements benefit missional objectives
6. Application form including the deprivation index rating for your parish.
7. All applications are to be made electronically to support our aim in becoming as paperless as we can.
8. No late applications will be accepted past the published dates.
9. All applications to be sent to keith.halliday@yorkdiocese.org

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Keith Halliday by email at keith.halliday@yorkdiocese.org