



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

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Lord Greenhalgh
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Dear Nigel,

Thank you for your letter of 26 May requesting support to help faith groups access Government funding as the country builds back better from the pandemic. As the Minister with responsibility for Faith, I welcome the opportunity to respond. I recognise that this has been, and remains, a challenging time and thank you for writing in on this important matter.

Faith and belief are a vital part of people's identities and motivate many to play a key part in their communities. The Government recognises the impact that the pandemic has had on a wide range of community and voluntary groups, including faith groups and places of worship and I want to thank faith and belief groups across the UK for the invaluable work that has been done over the past year.

As part of the response to the impact of Covid-19, the Government made available a package of support specifically for charities and businesses. Places of worship and faith groups which are also registered charities have been able to apply to a number of these schemes on the basis of being impacted organisations themselves, to support their work delivering community services in response to the pandemic.

This included the Government's £750 million package of support specifically for charities, social enterprises and the voluntary sector. Many places of worship who employ people have also benefitted from the Government's furlough scheme, which was recently extended to the end of September 2021 where needed.

Regarding the UK Community Renewal Fund (UKCRF), faith groups are eligible to receive funding to deliver activities that meet the priorities set out in the fund Prospectus. In England, the application process will have been via the lead authority for the area where the organisation is based.

The Government continues to engage regularly with a range of faith leaders and including through our Places of Worship Taskforce and regular roundtable meetings with major faith groups - to better understand how the Government can support them to respond to the pressures they face at this time.

Officials will also continue to explore how to build on the way faith groups have partnered with local and national government throughout the pandemic.

Information on schemes that are currently open which may be of help to faith groups and places of worship are set out below.

The Coronavirus Job Retention scheme (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>) is another scheme that could also support staffing costs for places of worship.

Registered businesses may apply for financial support; the criteria depend on where the business is located, the annual turnover, and the number of staff employed. Full details can be found at; <https://www.gov.uk/business-coronavirus-support-finder>.

To encourage congregational donations, religious groups may also wish to consider **The Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme**. This allows eligible charities to claim top-up payments on cash donations of £30 or less where it is difficult to obtain as Gift Aid declaration. Further details, including who can claim, can be found at; <https://www.gov.uk/claim-gift-aid/small-donations-scheme>.

The Listed Places of worship grant scheme; <http://www.lpwscheme.org.uk/> is run by DCMS, and makes grants towards the VAT incurred in making repairs and carrying out alterations to listed buildings mainly used for places of worship. Again, the criteria are different depending on where the applicant lives in the United Kingdom.

The National Lottery Community Fund is available to support people and communities most impacted by the pandemic; <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/covid-19>. Different criteria apply depending on where the applicant lives in the United Kingdom.

I encourage places of worship and faith groups to monitor the Government's web pages that offer information on the schemes currently available, and new schemes when they are launched, such as: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/financial-support-for-voluntary-community-and-social-enterprise-vcse-organisations-to-respond-to-coronavirus-covid-19>.

I hope this information is of help to you. Thank you again for writing in on this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lord Greenhalgh', written in a cursive style.

LORD GREENHALGH