

How is the Yorkshire Common Application Form used and received in the region?



Dr Katy Adams
University of Sheffield
k.adams@sheffield.ac.uk



The context and today's presentation

University of Sheffield connection with **Yorkshire Funders** +

Previous **research** into funder-nonprofit relationships



Report into the Common Application Form

(report due to be published in the New Year, alongside another new initiative, the Common Report Form)

Today's goals:

Introduce the YCAF

**Overview of
report's findings**

**Suggest and encourage steps
to increase effective uptake**

The Yorkshire Common Application Form

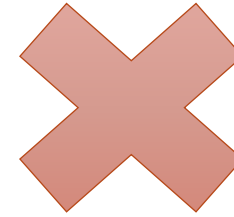
1. Why was the YCAF created?
2. How was the YCAF created?
3. What is the YCAF?
4. How is the YCAF being used?
5. How has the YCAF been received?
6. What challenge does the YCAF face?
7. Next steps

1. Why was the YCAF created?

- The post-Covid funding environment:

- **Challenges**

- Funder-nonprofit power imbalances
 - Missed opportunities for mutual benefit
 - Complicated, wasteful application processes



- **Positives**

- Collaboration and mutual support
 - Increased funder self-awareness and reflection



2. How was the YCAF created?

- YCAF originally conceived in **2019** – enthusiasm grew during Covid, leading to taskforce creation in **2021**
 - Comparison of application forms of taskforce members
 - Questions developed to obtain the common information required
- Pilot version launched summer **2022**
- On-going review by the **Aligned Working Network**
 - Also creating the **Common Report Form** (CRF) to help funders gather data on impact – planned launch in the New Year

3. What is the YCAF?

A set of questions to replace funders' existing application processes

Aims to make it easier for nonprofits to apply for funding by enabling them to use the same answers for multiple funders

- Recommended for grants up to £5000
- Embedding into funders' online systems possible via Jotform

Terminology: YCAF becoming CAF from 2026

4. How is the YCAF being used?

- Currently known to be used by 13 funders
- **Personalisation** is widespread:
 - Adding funders' logos
 - Online or paper
 - Removing or adding questions ('tweaking')
 - Amounts greater than £5000
 - Using the YCAF as inspiration

Aligns the YCAF with funders' own systems or requirements

Maintains funders' personal relationship with nonprofits

5. How has the YCAF been received?

Very positively!

Improved nonprofit communication,
helping funder assessment

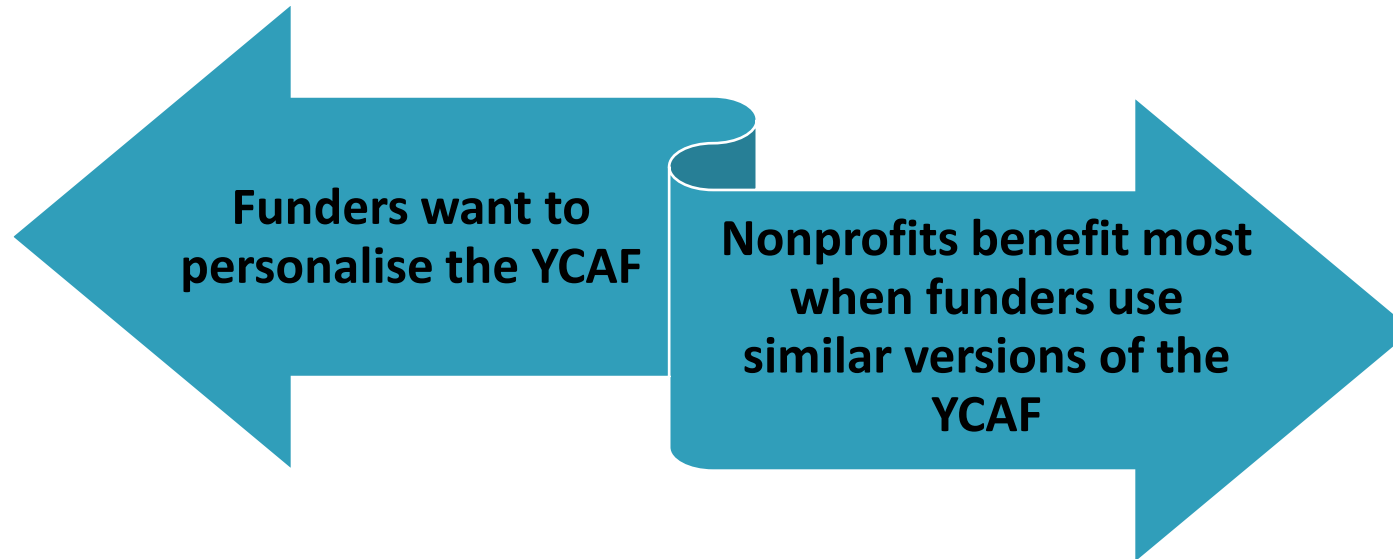
- **Clarity** on what is needed (and what isn't)
- Particular beneficial to **smaller nonprofits**, levelling the playing field
- Easier **comparison** of applications for funders

Increased funder self-awareness,
improving relationships with nonprofits

- Funders encouraged to **think** about their application processes and **learn** from others
- Helps to **reassure** nonprofits that funders are aware of the difficulties they can face

6. What challenge does the YCAF face?

- YCAF not yet being used by enough funders to enable nonprofits to reuse applications, reducing its impact



7. Next steps

- The power to achieve most impact lies with the funders
- Funders therefore need to be encouraged and enabled

(1) to use the YCAF

AND

**(2) to ensure their choices around how
they adopt the YCAF benefit
nonprofits**

The YCAF is an approach and a philosophy, not just a product!

Questions? Thoughts?

Carla Marshall

Yorkshire Funders / Sir George Martin Trust

carla@yorkshirefunders.org.uk



www.yorkshirefunders.org.uk/ycaf/

Dr Katy Adams

University of Sheffield

k.adams@sheffield.ac.uk

