

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR COMMON APPLICATION FORM (CAF)

Yorkshire Funders – a network of funders from Yorkshire and beyond – developed their Common Application Form (CAF) initiative in 2022 to save grant seekers time and energy when applying for funds. There are now 12 local grant makers using the CAF. In January 2026, following requests from the frontline and funders, the Common Report Form (CRF) was launched. The more grant makers adopt the CAF and CRF, the more grant seekers and grant holders will find they are being asked the same questions in the same format and not have to complete dozens of different forms which is exhausting.

1. The CAF is to be used by funding organisations giving out grants to VCSE (Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise) organisations and should be provided to grant seekers to complete when they are in need of funding.
2. The CAF and CRF have been designed by a Yorkshire Funders' task force made up of local grantmakers, with input from frontline charities and CICs, (Community Interest Companies) to ensure that the CAF meets the needs of both funders and grant holders.
3. The CAF is for smaller grants – around £5,000 or less – but some funders may find the form suits their needs for larger and/or multi-year grants.
4. Yorkshire Funders acknowledges that some funders may need to adapt the CAF template slightly by modifying the wording or removing/adding a question, but we hope large changes won't be made otherwise the form will not be 'common'. You will see that at the end of the CAF, there are some optional questions that can be added.
5. Funders can decide if they wish to ask for less of the supporting documentation from applicants at the very end of the CAF, e.g. you may review all applicants' accounts on the Charity Commission website and therefore not feel it is necessary for the applicant to send them.
6. It is up to each funder to decide if they create a digital or Word document CAF and what format is best for them and their grant holders. It may be added as a form to their online grant management system, sent out as a Microsoft, Google Forms or Jotform link, or a Word document.
7. Ensure that the use and storage of the data on your completed CAFs and CRFs is in line with your Privacy/GDPR policy.
8. If your organisation wants to adopt the CAF, you can download the template [via this link](#), but please inform alex@yorkshirefunders.org.uk so that Yorkshire Funders can log who is using the CAF.

You may also wish to adopt the Common Report Form (CRF) to be used in end of grant reporting. You can view the template for this [here](#).

Dr. Katy Adams from Sheffield University has written a report on the CAF, including interviews with funder adopters and grant applicants. Read the full report [here](#) (or [abridged summary here](#).)

If you would like to find out more about the CAF and CRF, email carla@yorkshirefunders.org.uk

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