



Guidance for grant applicants

July 2020

This guidance will help you to complete our online application form. We appreciate the work that goes into making a funding application. This information will help you to give us the information we need so that we can make a fair and informed decision.

For tips on using the online application form, please refer to the troubleshooter on our [website](#).

We suggest you read pages 1-4 of this guidance carefully before investing time in applying.

Contents

	Page
What we fund and don't fund	2
How to apply	3
Application questions	5
- What you want to achieve	5
- Describing your project	6
- Co-production with autistic young people	7
- What makes a good outcome	8
- Impact over time	10
- Ways to measure impact	11
Frequently asked questions	12

Sheila Coates Foundation grant giving

What projects will we consider?

SCF will consider projects that will help young people with autism access mainstream school.

We may fund projects that:

- help autistic young people fully take part in mainstream activities where statutorily funded support is not enough
- help autistic young people participate in after-school or outside-college activities or study support
- help autistic young people attend school through alternative education provision
- improve autistic young peoples' mental health and well-being.

We don't want to replicate support or interventions that are, or should be, statutorily provided. Instead, SCF grants will help those working with autistic young people to set up and run projects that will make a significant difference in conjunction with what is already on offer.

The following are just examples of what SCF may consider funding:

- the development of spaces or rooms that young people can access during unstructured times and/or structured times
- activities that support inclusion and engagement in education for young people
- resources and equipment related to particular young people's interests to engage them in education
- educational, psychological or therapeutic assessments and interventions
- supporting transition between key stages
- training for staff or work with parents, carers or families as part of a project.

We are looking for innovative, creative solutions.

The SCF will not fund:

- grants which will be passed on to other establishments, for example within an academy or health trust
- requests where a statutory agency (such as a local authority or health service) has assessed a need and has a responsibility to fund but has failed to do so
- projects which promote religion
- bursaries, sponsored places, fees or equivalent
- political activity or campaigning
- individuals (unless an eligible organisation is applying on their behalf)
- general appeals or endowment funds
- help with budget shortfalls or debt repayments
- projects with unspecified expenditure
- organisational overheads or running costs which the organisation would incur whether the project was running or not — although we will consider funding

support costs incurred as a direct result of running the project

How to apply

We have a four stage application process. The process, from when you start your application to being notified whether you have been awarded a grant normally takes around two months. This will be longer if we have to come to you for more information.

1. **A short eligibility questionnaire.** This will very quickly let you know whether you are eligible to apply for a grant.
After you complete this you will hear by automated email whether you are eligible to apply for funding.
2. **The application form.** This is an opportunity for you to tell us about your project and what you hope it will achieve. In the pilot, we ask that you submit this by 1st August.
3. **Review and decision.** Here, you wait while SCF reviews your application. We may ask you for more information.
In our pilot, we will let you know by 1st September 2020 whether you are successful. This should be roughly four to six weeks after you have submitted your application.
4. **Planning.** If your application is successful, we'll assign you a SCF representative who will consider some initial planning with you, support you to submit a project plan, agree a start date and reporting schedule. This should be complete within three weeks of being awarded a grant.

Application Tips

- Please write in clear, simple English - avoid jargon and acronyms.
- Keep to the word count.
- Back up your application with figures and evidence wherever possible.
- Assume we know about the general context of your work. Don't take up a lot of space describing background issues, or theory.
- Don't assume we know anything about your project or the approaches you take. Ask someone who doesn't know the project to read the application before you submit it to check whether you have been clear.

Stage 1 Eligibility Questionnaire

Our eligibility questionnaire is a short set of yes/no questions and is completed online.

If you answer 'yes' to all of these questions, you can proceed to Stage 2.

If any of your answers is 'no', you are not eligible to apply and we will let you know. Answering 'yes' to all questions in this questionnaire is a requirement of any application. If you're unsure why you have been unsuccessful, our [frequently asked questions](#) on page 11 may help.

Getting through stage 1 does not guarantee your application will ultimately be successful.

Stage 2 Application Form.

Before answering any questions, take time to read the criteria against which your completed application will be judged. Your application needs to be clear, and help us to understand how it addresses these [criteria](#).

We will only ask for as much information as we need to effectively consider a grant application, to manage an award if you are successful and to monitor its progress. In submitting an application you are agreeing to us processing your data for these purposes and in the ways outlined in our [privacy policy](#). We do not require personal information about the young people with whom you are working.

For our application form, we use an online programme called 'SurveyMonkey Apply'.

When you click through to your application from our website, you register your contact details including your email address. The application form saves your answers as you complete each section. If you want to complete the form over a period of time, you can leave and come back to it by logging on again. You can make changes to what you have written by using the edit function. Look for the three red dots (...) at the top right of the application form. This has a drop down menu, which includes 'edit' when this is an option. The form will give you the opportunity to read through and check your answers before you finally submit.

The form is online, and must be submitted online. It is possible to download the application form to help you gather the information you need and to discuss your answers with colleagues, but please note that we do not accept email attachments, or hard copy forms.

Each question has a specified word limit, shown at the end of the question in brackets. Sometimes there is also a minimum (e.g. 100-200). The form counts words as you write so

you can keep a check. You will not be able to submit if you exceed the maximum word limit or if you do not reach the minimum.

The rest of this document gives guidance for completing certain questions in the application form. Reading the guidance will help you to know exactly what information we want to see.

Application questions

This section helps you to give the information we need in your application form.

Question 3

What do you want to achieve through this grant?

Write a short summary of the changes you expect to see as a result of the grant; the difference you will make.

You will see that we have just given you a maximum of 75 words for your answer.

Guidance

We want a short summary which describes what difference you want to make. Remember, this question is not about what you want to DO (that's question four), it is about what difference you want to make.

For example, in your project you might want to create a break-out space in school where autistic young people can go at lunch times and choose activities with other young people. You can write all about what you will do in question four, but for this question you need to focus on **what difference it will make to young people**. Write something like this:

What you want to ACHIEVE
Our project will help autistic young people feel safe at lunch times. It will help them feel more confident in making decisions about what to do in their spare time and to enjoy lunchtime. This will mean they are more able to start afternoon lessons calmly so they can settle and learn. We expect to see improvements in their engagement in the classroom.

Question 10 will help you to expand on the answer to this question.

Question 4

How do you want to achieve it – what you want to do in your project?

This is where you describe your project. Describe who you are aiming to help and the activities or services you are asking us to fund. Try and give us a clear picture of what it is you intend doing with the grant.

Guidance

Your answer to this question should bring your project alive, so that we can clearly see what you will be doing. Include some or all of the following information.

- The need for your project - why is the work needed? Who or what has driven you to apply for funding?
- What will happen in your project - we should clearly be able to picture what you will be doing with the funding.
- The young people you will work with, and how many your project will affect.
- What materials, resources, equipment will you need?
- How long will it take?
- The rationale for what you are doing, or the approaches you use in your project - why have you chosen to work in this way? Is there evidence that shows that your project will be effective?

A note on what we mean by 'evidence'.

We are interested in all kinds of 'evidence'. This may include research evidence of effectiveness, but not necessarily. Having more than one source of evidence, and evidence that is as objective as possible (not just someone's opinion) will strengthen your answer to this question.

- Is this something you have trialled on a small scale already?
- Have young people told you this is what they want?
- Have you read a case study or article in a magazine or journal where this has been successful?
- Is it happening in a neighbouring school?
- Did you hear about it at an event, a conference, a networking meeting?

We do not want you to send in a project plan at this stage. Please use the words available to bring your project alive.

Question 6

How will you involve autistic young people in your project?

It is important to SCF that young people are involved in your project, and that this is not done tokenistically. This may be done at design, implementation, monitoring or reporting stages - or all the way through.

Guidance

‘Co-production’ is the collaboration between different people involved in a piece of work. This could be in a project, a piece of research, designing services, creating a strategic plan. The concept of co-production means that all parties need to be *working together* to influence the planning, design or delivery.

In a SCF project, we want to see young people involved in shaping your project, as well as benefiting from it. Stronger proposals will be those which involve autistic young people in as many different stages as possible. We are looking for ways you have done this effectively.

Things to remember about co-production.

- Set the scene. When you consult with young people make sure they know there isn't a 'right' answer, and that they can say what they think.
- Consider how easily it is for the autistic young people you work with to self reflect or to communicate; what ways will make it easier?
- Draw on your knowledge of the autistic young people you work with to ensure you are hearing their own views and ideas.
- Each young person with autism may have very different views or perceptions. Be prepared to be surprised, and to make changes based on what you have heard.
- Involve young people regularly, not just as a one off.
- Be sure to let young people know that you have heard their views, and tell them clearly how this has influenced your project.
- Be prepared to use different methods to get answers from the young people, including games, activities, drawings and discussions.

Useful resources and materials

[An autistic young person](#) talks about how important it is to be heard

Guidance from the National Autistic Society: [Local Voices, Local Choices](#)

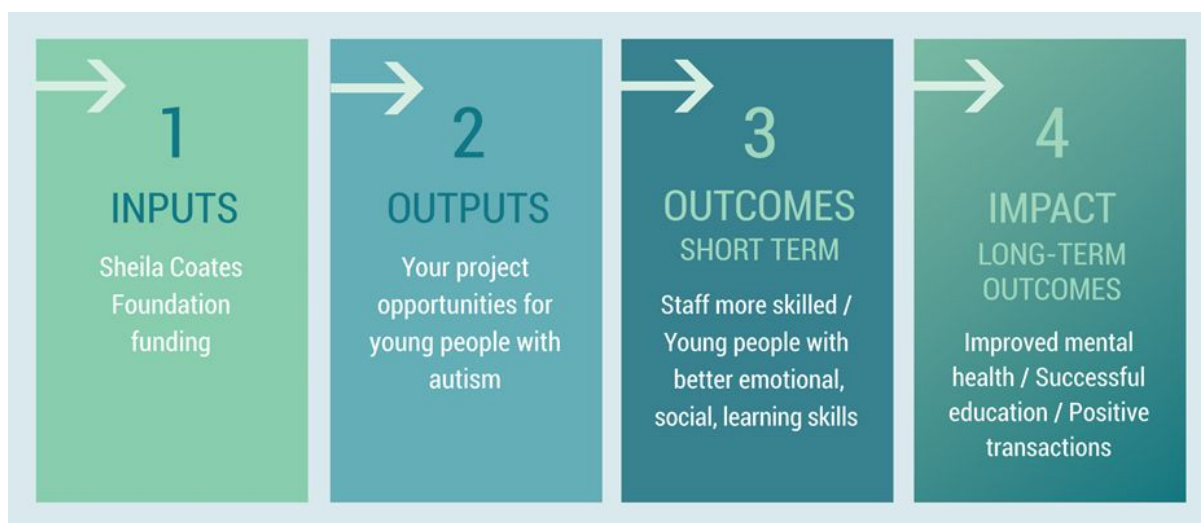
Question 10

What difference do you want to make? What are your outcomes?

Here we ask you to expand your answer to question 3 into no more than three outcomes. Each outcome there is a maximum of 20 words. To help you, the online application form automatically reproduces what you wrote in question 3.

Guidance

You may find this theory of change diagram helpful:



Outcomes The changes, benefits or learning that come about **as a result of your activities**. They could be for young people or for adults.

Impact This can sometimes be called long-term outcomes.

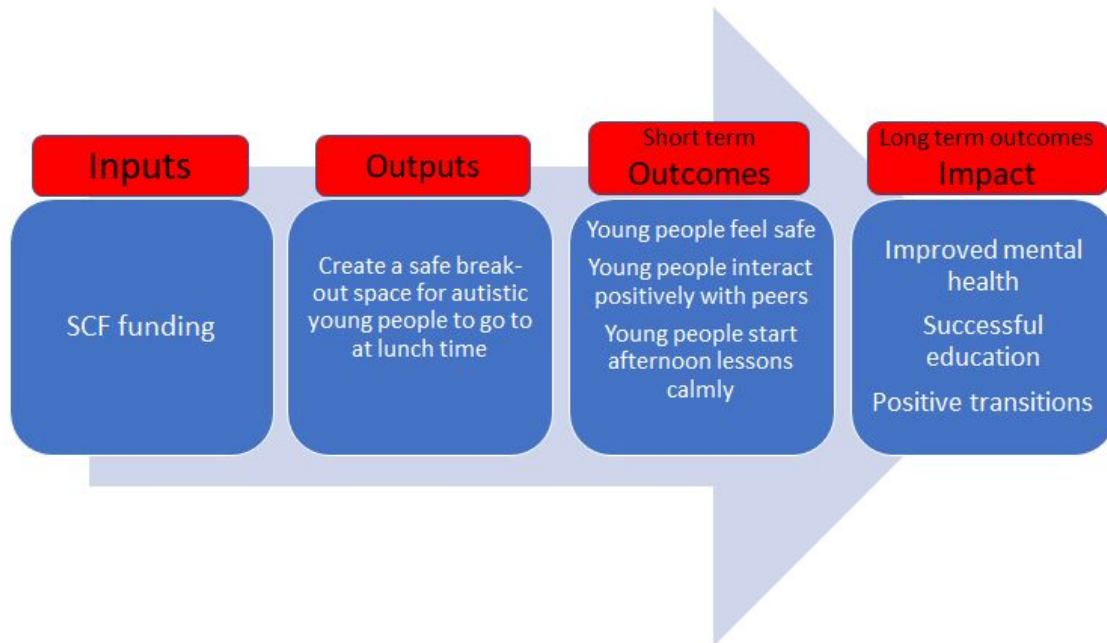
SCF aims to improve mental health and to enhance education. Your project should aim to contribute to these long-term outcomes.

Think what **key outcomes** you want to achieve as a result of SCF funding. Then think what **impact** do you expect it to have over time - you answer this in question 11.

Your outcomes will be the main way SCF will monitor the progress of your project. In your progress reports, we will want you to tell us about what you have achieved for each outcome.

Outcomes are not what you will do or produce, they answer the question 'so what?'

Use the theory of change diagram to think through your outcomes - what you want to achieve through doing your project. For example:



Your outcomes should be easy to measure (see question 12).

Question 11

What impact do you expect to see over time?

Tell us how your project contributes to changes in young people's education and/or mental health.

Guidance

We know that it can take longer than a few months to have an impact on learning or mental health, so this is why 'impact' is sometimes called 'long-term outcomes'. In your answer to this question, think how your project may impact on these longer term outcomes.

We do not expect you to go into detail, or to measure these longer term outcomes. However we do expect you to have an understanding of the link between your intended outcomes and young people's education or mental health. You may want to draw on evidence to show the link.

Question 12

How will you measure your outcomes?

For each outcome that you have identified, tell us what information you will collect to measure the difference you have made.

Guidance

SCF is strongly committed to measuring the difference our grants make. We do not expect you to carry out a piece of research, however but we do need you to evaluate the difference your project makes.

How you do this will depend on the size of the grant, and the nature of the project. In your answer to this question include **how** you'll measure, **what information** you'll collect, **from whom**, **when** you'll collect it and then **what you'll do with** the information collected.

A few things to think about:

- We value both hard and soft evidence, so **numbers** are useful to demonstrate change but the **stories** behind them can really show what that means.
- Collecting information before and after your project helps to show change, but you can also ask retrospective questions at the end of your project - e.g. *'how confident do you feel now compared with before we started the project?'*
- The more measures you collect, the stronger your evidence.
- You can involve young people in your evaluation. Hearing from them about how things have changed for them is a powerful way of showing impact.

Think about each outcome, and how you can measure it. There may be more than one measure for each outcome. Some examples of different kinds of measures you could use:

Quantitative	Qualitative
<i>Involve numbers - good for showing what outcomes have occurred.</i>	<i>Involve words - good to telling the story behind the numbers</i>
Questionnaires or surveys 'Distance travelled' tools e.g. rating scales Observations/learning walks Assessment data 'Placing yourself' game Sorting cards Checklists Rating (e.g. using stickers, ticks)	Interviews Focus groups Observation/learning walks Case studies Diaries Mapping/drawing pictures Pictures/photographs

Frequently Asked Questions

These answers will give you important information about SCF projects.

How many projects will we include in the pilot?

In its pilot, SCF will be approaching schools in three areas: Southampton, Oxfordshire and Brighton/East Sussex. These have been chosen as areas where we already have contacts, where we are already aware of need. We will be approaching a few schools, colleges and other provisions in each area, with a view to awarding two grants in each area.

Is it possible to apply for a grant if you are not in a pilot area?

For our pilot, we are not operating an open application system. Pilot projects will be drawn from areas where we already have contacts, where we are already aware of need. We will not therefore accept or process applications which are outside these areas during our pilot.

In May 2021 we plan to launch a second pilot, and will be extending the number of areas. From May 2022, the plan is to offer an open application system.

How will a decision be made to award a grant?

After you submit your small grant application you will receive an email confirming that we have received it. We will do a basic check to see if you have submitted all the information we need, if your organisation meets our minimum standards for grant-making and if you have applied for a project we are able to fund. We will then review your application against a set of [criteria](#), taking into consideration all the information you have provided.

Please note: in the pilot, as we are funding a limited number of projects, not all applications will be successful. You will be informed of the decision by email. We may also contact you to ask any additional questions we may have about your application.

What are SCF minimum standards for grant-making?

The first things we check when we get an application are:

- Is the application from a mainstream secondary school, college or other educational provision?
- Do they support autistic young people to access mainstream education?
- Is the project aiming to impact on learning and/or mental health of autistic young people?
- Have all the questions been answered?

There is a list of the kind of projects we do and don't fund [on our website](#). It's also important to read the [criteria](#) against which your application will be reviewed when we're making a decision.

We are a special school/college, can we apply for a grant?

No, SCF grants are awarded to mainstream secondary schools, colleges or other educational provision. If you are a special school or college and have an idea for a project that could support transition to mainstream provision, then contact the mainstream school concerned to see if they would be interested in submitting an application.

I am a parent of an autistic young person, can I apply for a grant?

SCF only gives grants to mainstream schools, colleges or other educational provision where autistic young people are supported to access mainstream education. This support may include working closely with parents. Get in touch with your child's educational provision, let them know about SCF and they may be interested in submitting an application. Having you, as a parent, on board will add value to an application.

We're an organisation that supports families of autistic children, can we apply for grants?

SCF only gives grants to mainstream schools, colleges or other educational provision where autistic young people are supported to access mainstream education. This support may include working closely with local organisations who support families of autistic young people. We advise getting in touch with local provision and exploring how you can work together - but remember the application has to come from them. Working closely with local organisations will strengthen an application.

I am a young person with autism, can I apply for a grant?

SCF only gives grants to mainstream schools, colleges or other educational provision where autistic young people are supported to access mainstream education. Start a conversation with the people who teach you, let them know about SCF. Share any ideas you have for things you know will really help you to learn or to feel happy and calm. Applications where the ideas have come from young people will be strong, so you can really help to add value.

Can we submit an application from our Academy Trust or does it have to be from one single school, college or other provision?

Only schools, colleges or other educational provision can apply for funding. A Trust or Local Authority can support an establishment to apply, or submit an application on behalf of a school, but the application must come from one single establishment. That establishment will be the grantee with whom SCF will have an agreement and on-going relationship.

We are a primary school, can we apply for a grant?

No, SCF grants are given to secondary schools, college or other educational provision. If you have an idea for a project that could support transition to secondary school then contact the secondary school concerned to see if they would be interested in submitting an application.

Can we join with a partner school, or partner organisation and submit a joint application?

We welcome proposals where schools come together to collaborate; this will really enhance any potential impact. However, you should identify a lead establishment who would submit the application, and with whom we would have a grant agreement. In question 1 on your application form you can tell us about who you are working with.

We will not accept an application from an organisation that is not a mainstream school, college or other educational establishment. However, a partnership with a local organisation may strengthen an application - make this clear in questions 1 and 4 on your application form.

Can an SCF grant be used to support young people who have other special needs and disabilities?

SCF gives grants which enable autistic young people to access mainstream education. It is an essential criteria that the project you propose supports autistic young people. Sometimes, projects may include young people with other special educational needs and disabilities **as well as** autistic young people. Including other young people can be a strength if the aim is to facilitate inclusion. You need to make all of these things clear in your application.

We have a really successful service in school but the funding is being cut. Could we apply to SCF for funding to continue it?

This depends on what the service is. SCF does not fund support or interventions which would be considered 'statutory provision'. By this we mean activities that are or should be provided by the school or Local Authority as part of their agreed provision, particularly where a need has been assessed and there is a responsibility for a service to be provided.

In your application, make it clear how this is something that the school has developed in addition to 'business as usual'. We'll want to have evidence of impact, and we'll want to see how this is innovative and creative - not just more of the same.

What will happen once I have been successful in my grant application?

Successful applicants will be allocated a link SCF representative and in your first conversation with them, you'll agree various practical aspects to do with the grant. This includes agreeing final outcomes, timeline, payment schedule, bank details and reporting schedule.

You will then submit an outline plan using our [simple planning template](#), which includes authorisation by your school Headteacher or equivalent. The plan will be reviewed by your SCF representative, and once it has been approved you are ready to start your project. This will all take up to three weeks.

Grantees report on how they are doing against up to three measurable outcomes using a simple [progress report template](#). The number of reports needed will depend on the size of grant, but we'll need to know how you're doing before we can release installments of your grant.

SCF Trustees will be interested in visiting some projects to see the impact of grants, and yours may be selected. We'll give you plenty of notice and an idea of what to expect, but the visits are low-key and will have a focus on SCF engaging with your work.

If we are successful and are awarded a grant, when will money be released?

Shortly after you have been informed whether your application has been successful, a SCF representative will be in touch to do some initial planning with you. Part of this involves completing a simple project plan with key milestones. You will upload your completed plan to the online portal and when this has been approved, we will release the first instalment of your grant. There will be up to three instalments depending on the size and nature of the project. The sooner we get your plan, the sooner the funds will be released. This can happen quickly, usually between 1-3 weeks after you have been notified about your grant.

What do you mean by 'over and above what is statutory provision'?

We don't want to replicate support or interventions that are, or should be provided by the school or Local Authority as part of their agreed provision - things they HAVE to do. So, for example, we won't fund the delivery of something which is part of the curriculum, or something which is identified in a young person's education, health and care plan. We also won't fund applications where a statutory agency (such as a local authority or health service) has assessed a need and has a responsibility to fund but has failed to do so.

We know that provision varies from place to place, and so we expect you to make it clear in your application how this is above and beyond what is provided by your provision or Local Authority.

A main aim is that funding should help young people access mainstream education - what does this include?

This can be many things and will depend on the autistic young person or people being supported. However, it can include after school or out of school activities. It can also include working with other organisations, agencies or parents. The important thing is that you make it clear in your application how your project helps young people access mainstream education with impacts on education and/or mental health.

Why haven't I made it through the first stage of the application process?

If you answer 'no' to any of the questions in the eligibility questionnaire then you will not be able to proceed to stage two.

If we fail the eligibility questionnaire, can we have another go?

Yes, but we advise you to look carefully at the eligibility questionnaire questions. Some of these you will be able to change the answer by changing something in your application. Some will be more difficult, for example: *We are a secondary school, college or alternative secondary education provision in England.*

If you answer 'no' to any of the questions in the eligibility questionnaire then you will not be able to proceed to stage two.

Can we apply again if our application is unsuccessful?

Yes, you can reapply when the next round of funding is open.

If we have had one grant, can we apply for another one?

Being successful once does not prevent you from applying for further funding. This may be for:

- extending an existing funded project, when we'll need to see evidence of impact and a clear description of how this second grant will build on what has already happened
- a completely new project with different intended outcomes.

Can we apply if we need funding for a project that's longer than two years?

SCF grants are for projects which last one year. However, we will consider continuation funding if the one-year project is showing signs of its outcomes being met, and there are indications that a longer project will be even more impactful. We will need to see evidence of the impact and a clear description of how a second grant will build on what has already happened.

How long does it take for you to process an application? When will I hear the outcome once I've submitted the form?

The process, from when you start your application to being notified whether you have been awarded a grant normally takes around two months. This will be longer if we have to come to you for more information. We will usually give a date of when you can expect a decision.

If I need help with the application form, who should I ask?

The first stop for help with completing an application is this Application Guidance, which includes lots of useful practical support.

We also advise you to read through all of these Frequently Asked Questions as they also provide lots of support and help.

For tips on completing the online form, our troubleshooter [on our website](#) may help.

If you still have questions, you can get in touch by emailing us at enquiry@sheilacoates.foundation

Once we've started, can we make changes to the project?

All grant holders are allocated a SCF representative who will be the main point of contact. They will support you to plan out your project and agree a reporting schedule. However, we know that schools, colleges and other educational provision are dynamic institutions. We're also aware that a change to legislation, or a local event or disaster such as weather, flooding/storm damage, or a pandemic can result in changes to circumstances. SCF is a listening organisation and we are keen to work collaboratively with our grant holders.

You must discuss and agree any proposed changes with your SCF representative in advance of any changes taking place. Prepare for the discussion by thinking through and sharing a clear rationale for any changes. If it is possible to keep outcomes the same this is preferable, but we know this is not always possible.

Once we've started, how often do we have to keep in touch with SCF?

Once your project has started, your main point of contact with SCF will be your SCF representative. They will agree a reporting schedule with you which will vary according to the size and length of your project. Usually this is one or two progress reports, and then a final report. You will receive automatic email reminders before the report is due.

Your SCF representative will not expect any more contact than the progress reports, but if you have any questions, or if something has happened meaning that you need to make any changes then you should get in touch with them.

There may also be times when your SCF representative needs to contact you. For example, an SCF Trustee may want to visit your project to see the impact of SCF grants. We'll give you plenty of notice and an idea of what to expect, but these are low key and will have a focus on SCF engaging with your work.

During the pilot, SCF will also be in touch to have a conversation with you, or to ask you to fill in a questionnaire to help us evaluate the pilot.