



ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

CHANGE FUND 2026 – 2028

Guidance Notes

Version Number	Author	Purpose/change	Date
1.0	Community Planning	Grant Guidance Document updated dates	8 January 2026

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1.0 Introduction

The Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) Strategic Framework was launched by the Executive in September 2024. It intends to bring together a whole of society and whole of government response to address this issue which impacts the lives of far too many women and girls across our society. The main focus of this strategy is on prevention. This recognises that tackling the underlying causes of violence, abuse and harm towards women and girls and stopping it before it starts is vital.

The Strategy includes a first Delivery Plan (2024-26) and will support those organisations working to prevent and challenge the attitudes, behaviours and culture that can lead to violence against women and girls. It will deliver real change for those who suffer harm and abuse across our society every day.

These conditions should be read in conjunction with the [Grant Funding Policy](#).

1.1 Purpose of Grant Programme/Overview of fund

This guidance relates to the **Change Fund**.

Funding from the Executive Office (TEO) will enable Council to support community groups in their respective local government district. The **Change Fund** will help to mobilise grassroots action, support innovative delivery and maximise the impact of community-led initiatives contributing to the **Prevention outcomes of the EVAWG Strategic Framework**. These are:

Outcome 1: Changed attitudes, behaviours, and culture - Everyone in society understands what violence against women and girls is, including its root causes, and plays an active role in preventing it

Outcome 2: Healthy, respectful relationships - Everyone in society is equipped and empowered to enjoy healthy, respectful relationships

Outcome 3: Women and girls are safe and feel safe everywhere - Organisations and institutions across government and society embed the prevention of violence against women and girls in all that they do, so that women and girls are safe and feel safe everywhere

Choosing which outcomes your project will focus on;

All projects supported by the Change Fund must include a focus on Outcome 1 and specifically demonstrate how project proposals will increase awareness and understanding of what violence against women and girls is, including its root causes.

In addition to Outcome 1, applicants can also demonstrate how their project proposals contribute to Outcomes 2 and/or 3. Note that projects will not necessarily

score higher if multiple outcomes are selected and/or have a higher budget, the assessment process will focus on the quality, proportionate impact, and investment

effectiveness (including value for money) of the proposal – these can be considered high or low regardless of a project's budget or its focus on one or more outcomes.

Funding calls:

This is a two-year funded programme that enables community and voluntary organisations to apply for Tier 2 and Tier 3 programmes, activities, and projects delivered between 2026 and 2028.

Calls for Tier 1 programmes, activities, and projects will be issued annually.

The EVAWG Change Fund will be administered and supported by Council and will provide grant funding up to a maximum of £25,000 to successful community groups operating within their local district. The minimum grant awarded will be £1,000.

Funding can be applied for within three tiers of support:

- Tier 1: grants between £1,000 and £5,000
- Tier 2: grants between £5,001 and £15,000
- Tier 3: grants between £15,001 and £25,000

All applications are assessed by Council against set criteria. This is a competitive process, and awards are subject to funds available to Council.

Applicants can apply to Multiple Tiers: An applicant is allowed to submit one application for each available tier (e.g. different levels of funding, project categories, or program types).

Only one award per Applicant: Regardless of how many tiers an applicant applies to, they can only receive funding or approval for one project. If multiple applications are successful, the awarding body will likely decide which single project to award.

Delivery of successful projects and all grant funding must be incurred in full during the following financial years:

- Tier 1 Single Year funding: 1 April 2026 – 31 March 2027
- Tier 2 & Tier 3 Multiyear funding:
 - Yr 1: 1 April 2026 – 31 March 2027
 - Yr 2: 1 April 2027 – 31 March 2028

1.2 General Principles

The fundamental principles underpinning this grant guidance are:

Funding Award is based on evidenced need

The aim of grant funding is to provide financial support for projects and activities that add benefit to the Borough and contribute to improving the lives of local people and places. The following requirements **MUST** be met to be considered for funding:

- Have a clear purpose to the activity based on clearly evidenced need
- Be able to demonstrate how their project meets relevant funding criteria
- Can deliver high quality desired outcomes in a cost-effective manner
- The applicant organisation can demonstrate that it is well run with the capacity to deliver the project as stated
- Reflect the statutory remit of the Council, aligned to the Corporate Plan and Community Plan

Accessibility

Information on all grant funding programmes will be publicly available through the Councils website and proactively promoted across Mailing Lists, Social Media channels and Borough Life. This will include:

- Guidance on completion of relevant grant application
- Grant Management System embedded into Council public facing platform with digital accessibility options available
- Centralised Grant Funding information on Council webpage
- Guidance notes for all individual grant streams
- Point of contact clearly communicated for relevant queries
- Annual Grants Funding calendar made available

We will strive to ensure the process is user friendly, transparent and fully inclusive.

Accountability

The Council will at all times adhere to the policy and guidance criteria outlined within each grant funding programme.

- A clear decision making process will be utilised, with clear rationale and demonstrable evidence to support funding decisions
- Decision making process will be robust and transparent
- Funding decisions will be approved through Committee and Full Council with details made publicly available
- Unsuccessful applicants will be entitled to receive feedback on their application
- An accessible Appeals process will be communicated as part of each grants call

1.3 Who can apply?

Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS) organisations from within the Antrim and

Newtownabbey Borough may apply for funding. These are understood as: *“not-for-profit organisations that support a wide range of social, environmental and economic outcomes and rely to a large extent on voluntary contributions through their boards of trustees, formal volunteering and donations. The sector spans a very diverse range of organisations in terms of scale and focus of operations and interests.*

- *Volunteers define and drive this sector, but organisations will also all have some sort of formal structure or constitution. They are self-governing and independent from government or the private sector. They have social objectives and work to benefit the community. They may operate a social enterprise or community business but any profits will be re-invested for community benefit”.*

Some of these organisations may be registered charities. It may also include, for example, arts, faith, youth and sporting organisations. The eligibility of these and other organisations/groupings will be considered against the broad definition set out in above, including its emphasis on ‘not-for-profit’, ‘formal structure or constitution’ and that ‘they have social objectives and work to benefit the community’. Belonging to or being affiliated with larger organisations does not exclude individual branches from applying.

Grassroots organisations

The term ‘grassroots organisations’ is used in this document to refer to CVS organisations whose primary operations and beneficiaries are at local level, meaning within the specific local council area to which they are making an application to the EAWG Change Fund.

This fund is also open to umbrella organisations who have a location based within the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough

1.4 What can be funded?

Expenditure will potentially be considered eligible if clearly demonstrated by applicants that such expenditure will equip community groups to prevent violence against women and girls. There must be clear linkage between proposed activities (and associated expenditure) and the EAWG prevention outcomes: changing attitudes, behaviour and culture; healthy, respectful relations; women and girls feel safe and are safe everywhere.

Examples of eligible expenditure might include event costs; design and publishing; filming/photography/animations, website and other digital content development (if directly supporting project activities); marketing and development and/or delivery and/or attendance at relevant training* and resources; research; facilitation costs; counselling and related support services; small items of the equipment (under £1,000) essential to delivery of the project; development and delivery of relevant performances and creative initiatives.

* Training must be provided by an accredited/affiliated training provider that

specialises within this area of expertise (i.e. Women's aid, White Ribbon, Nexus and ONUS)

Eligible expenditure may also include proportionate administrative and/or staffing costs, as well as other running costs, where these are directly and necessarily incurred in the delivery of the approved activity and have been agreed in advance within the applicant's Letter of Offer.

The EVAWG Change Fund aims to equip community groups to prevent to violence against women and girls. This means ways to mobilise grassroots action and maximise the impact of community-led initiatives contributing to the **Prevention outcomes of the EVAWG [Strategic Framework](#)**

Supporting innovation

The Fund encourages and seeks to **support innovation** by local groups. Project proposals are anticipated to be varied and might enable groups to, for example, test new approaches, explore different ideas and ways of working, catalyse new or wider collaborations. There is no prescriptive listing of project types. The table below outlines some indicative activities which might feasibly emerge.

Tier	Funding Available	Description	How the grant is awarded
1	Funding between £1,000 and £5,000	Proposals might be for one-off events, projects, workshops or small clusters of activity aimed at awareness raising and aligned with all or some of the prevention outcomes in the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Framework 1, 2 and 3. (Outcome 1 is mandatory)	100% of the grant awarded will be paid in advance of the start date subject to receipt of an acceptance form This will be detailed within the formal letter of offer. All awards will be 100% vouched.
2	Funding between £5,001 and £15,000	Proposals might include expansion/enhancement of activities described in Tier 1, as well as planned programmes of activity, longer running initiatives, educational courses* aligned with all or some of the prevention outcomes in the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Framework 1, 2 and 3. (Outcome 1 is mandatory)	50% of the grant awarded will be paid in advance of the start date subject to receipt of an acceptance form. The remaining 50% will be paid on completion of vouching of the first 50% and completion

		* <i>Training must be provided by an accredited/affiliated training provider that specialises within this area of expertise (i.e. Women's aid, White Ribbon, Nexus and ONUS)</i>	of monitoring/evaluation forms at conclusion of the project/programme. This will be detailed within the formal letter of offer. All awards will be 100% vouched.
3	Funding between £15,001 and £25,000	<p>Proposals might be for planned programmes of activity, longer running initiatives, educational course aligned with some or all of the prevention outcomes in the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Framework 1, 2 and 3. (Outcome 1 is mandatory). Awards may also be for activities described in Tiers 1 and 2.</p> <p>and</p> <p>Proposals must demonstrate an aspect of mentoring or significant collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 'mentoring' we mean where a more experienced organisation with better developed capacity will assist another less experienced organisation or organisations in developing the skills and knowledge to perform more effectively. This may include sharing resources and networks. This is with a view to building the capacity of the mentored organisation. • Collaboration is defined as working with organisation(s) of a similar level/capacity and can include working with both voluntary and statutory organisations. 	

These examples are indicative only and not an exhaustive list. Projects and associated costs/expenditure will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

1.5 What cannot be funded?

Organisations and individuals who would not be considered as CVS organisations as described above. The assessment process will provide adjudication as required.

Political parties.

Any other organisation or project proposals that councils and/or TEO may from time to time deem to be ineligible, including incompatibility with the vision, principles and

outcomes of the Strategic Framework for Ending Violence Against Women and Girls; or that support to a project/organisation risks contravening legislative requirements and Executive priorities in respect of employment, health and safety, discrimination, equality of opportunity, and promotion of good relations.

1.6 Exclusions

Council will not normally fund the following:

- Costs associated with projects operating outside of the Borough Council area.
- Applications for specific projects which are clearly the responsibility of another statutory organisation.
- Retrospective expenditure.
- Applications received after the closing date specified in the public advertisement.
- Salary costs that are not inked directly to the delivery of the project or activity
- Unrelated professional fees.
- Bank charges, loans, deficits or fines.
- For profit enterprises.
- Costs that are already covered by other sources of funding.
- Organisations that are able to share out profits to individuals, members or shareholders.
- Charity, fundraising events and donations.
- Individuals.
- Costs that are not clearly linked to the project.
- Projects that provide no significant benefit to the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council area.
- Projects that duplicate what already exists.
- Projects that are not in line with Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council policies.
- It is unlikely that you will receive funding if you have previously received a grant from us that was not managed in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Letter of Offer.
- Thematic activity such as arts, culture, sport etc. unless the application meets the community development eligibility criteria and the programme is of a community development nature.
- The purchase of balloons and single use plastics.
- The purchase of flags and bunting without prior approval.
- Alcohol

General conditions for funding

- All applications must be completed in full, submitted with **any** necessary relevant supporting information as requested and received by the closing date set out in the public advertisement otherwise they will not be considered.
- An application must meet all of the criteria to be considered, and the applicant organisation must meet all of the conditions previously outlined to be eligible to apply as mentioned in the earlier section, “Section 1: Who can apply?”
- Payments will only be made by electronic bank transfer to an organisation’s bank account and not to any one individual.
- Grants will only be approved if the Council is satisfied that the applicant has the necessary expertise and resources to see the application through to successful completion.
- Groups seeking support from Council should have a minimum of £2M Public Liability and £10M Employers’ Liability in place or be willing to obtain this cover. These are Council’s minimum requirements. However, you are advised to contact your insurance broker to ensure that these levels are sufficient to cover the activities of your organisation. Use of inflatables, fireworks etc. may require higher levels of cover.
- Retrospective applications will not be considered.
- It is a stipulation of all successful grant applications that the Council and any other relevant funders’ logos appear on all publicity material during the duration of the grant and that the Council’s support is acknowledged. If requested, applicants must attend press opportunities and participate in all media activities as requested by Council staff. All printed materials and use of the logo must be agreed and approved by Council staff.
- Post project the applicant will be required to complete the Council’s monitoring and evaluation form, in order to demonstrate how the organisation met the criteria detailed in the application form.
- Council reserves the right to request further information or clarification on any request for support and to share information on support with other funders.
- To be eligible for funding you must have a child protection policy in place if your project involves, or may involve, children or young people under the age of 18 or a Safeguarding Adults policy if your project involves, or may involve, adults at risk.

Applicants should note that this is a competitive process and awards are subject to the availability of funds and may be subject to change.

2.0 How to answer the questions?

It is therefore anticipated that eligible organisations will only be awarded one application to the opening call from the local council in which they have their primary operations and in which the majority of their beneficiaries live. Applicants are required to have a demonstrable track record of grassroots activity/impact and to detail how proposed activities will primarily support beneficiaries in the council area to which they make their application. Eligible organisations may be able to make further

applications to subsequent calls for Tier 1 only within 2027/28 should funding be available and depending on criteria or conditions councils and/or TEO apply in subsequent calls.

The level of grant funding applicants choose to apply for (Tier 1, 2 or 3) will determine how much information is needed for assessors to sufficiently consider project proposals. For example, a project proposal for Tier 1 support (e.g. up to £5,000) should require less information and associated evidence than a Tier 3 project (maximum of £25,000). The application form has therefore been designed to reflect this.

2.1 Information about your organisation

This section of the application form gathers information about your organisation, including contact details and insight on the purpose and work of your organisation, which will enable the assessment process to check eligibility (CVS status). You'll also indicate here which Tier of grant support you're applying for (Tier 1, 2 or 3).

2.2 Project proposal

This section of the application form gathers information about your project proposal – what you want to do and why. This is the part of the form where you must clearly and sufficiently demonstrate how your project supports the Prevention Outcomes (1, 2 and/or 3) of the EVAWG Strategic framework. Note that demonstrating a project's contribution to Outcome 1 is mandatory for all tiers of grant support applied for.

This section allows you to detail why you think this project approach will work for the proportionate impact you plan to make. For example, a low budget and well planned and delivered project, strongly supporting the Prevention outcomes, can make a significant impact on a smaller number of people. As noted previously in Section 1, projects will not necessarily score higher if multiple outcomes are selected and/or have a higher budget. The assessment process will focus on the quality, proportionate impact, and investment effectiveness (including value for money) of each proposal.

You might reference, for example, evidence of your approach working before, or how your proposal is an innovative way to reach more people or make a greater impact on a smaller number of participants.

2.3 Project Delivery

This section of the application form is where you detail how you are going to deliver the project. It includes timescales and your budget (how grant funding will be used and on what).

You will be asked to think about how you will manage any potential risks to delivery, and how you might capture the impact of your projects.

If relevant, in this section you will provide assurances that all safeguarding issues are appropriately addressed by your organisation (such as projects which include working with children and young people, and other vulnerable persons).

In this section you will detail any partner organisations involved in your project, their role and how/if their involvement requires any allocation of funds your organisation will receive if your application is successful.

You will also declare any Change Fund applications you have made to other council areas, as well as detailing (if known at the time of your application) any proposed partnerships/collaborations involving your organisation (in a paid/funded capacity or otherwise) that other organisations will be declaring in their applications to any council.

In line with current policy evaluation methods that have been introduced across the NI Executive, the Change Fund is employing a method known as Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA). You are best placed to tell us about the difference you think your project will make. The application form will allow you to start thinking about how to measure the impact of your project, and you can provide initial ideas of your project specific output measures. Do not worry if you are not familiar with OBA. If your project is awarded funding, you will receive further assistance in developing your report card and approach to data collection, monitoring and evaluation.

3.0 How we assess and score your application

Each application will be considered on its own merits. In order to deliver the programme's aim and general principles, applicants will need to demonstrate how their community development project meets the appropriate criteria. It is important to remember that the application will be assessed ONLY on the information provided in the application form and specifically in the box relating to the particular question asked. Any information that you do not include or that is contained in other parts of the application form will not be considered. Therefore, you MUST demonstrate how you meet the essential criteria as set out in these guidelines in the application.

3.1 Eligibility assessment

Applications received by councils will be logged and undergo eligibility checks. If eligibility information is missing at this point, you will be contacted and given 10 days to submit the missing information. Failure to provide all necessary eligibility information and complete forms as required will mean

your application will not go forward for assessment in the current funding call.

3.2 Assessment and scoring

Scoring Matrix		Percentage weighting
TIERS 1 AND 2		
1.	How will your project support the Prevention Outcomes of the EVAWG Strategic framework? (Outcome 1 is mandatory)	60
2.	Ability to deliver the proposal to meet local needs	20
3.	Investment effectiveness (including Value for Money) of the proposal	20

Scoring Matrix		Percentage weighting
TIER 3		
1.	How will your project support the Prevention Outcomes of the EVAWG Strategic framework? (Outcome 1 is mandatory)	50
2.	The impact of the mentoring or collaboration aspects of the proposal	10
3.	Ability to deliver the proposal to meet local needs	20
4.	Investment effectiveness (including Value for Money) of the proposal	20

3.3 What happens if an application is successful?

If your organisation is successful, you will be issued a Letter of Offer from the council.

This will detail:

- general conditions of the grant
- any special conditions
- project budget and targets
- procurement requirements
- monitoring requirements
- stages which the grant will be paid

You must sign, date and return the Letter of Offer to confirm that you are accepting the grant. You can also decline to accept.

You will not be reimbursed for any project costs you pay or agree to pay before you have returned a signed Letter of Offer and it is received by the council.

3.4 Monitoring and reporting

If your project receives grant support, you will be in receipt of public funding, and this must be accountable. Monitoring and reporting are an essential requirement for you in delivering your project. As noted in Section 8, Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) will be used to capture the progress and impact of your project. Assistance will be available to help you finalised your report card and approach to data collection, monitoring and evaluation.

We will also ask all organisations for auditing purposes, to check how the grant was spent and that the terms and conditions of the funding were met. You will be contacted by your local Council Lead and you will be asked to provide invoices and bank statements for all the items you are claiming through the grant.

If your project does not meet its targets and outcomes, we can review and reduce the amount of funding awarded.

If any information in the application, monitoring or supporting information is found to be untrue or misleading, we will withdraw any grant. If we have already paid part of a grant to your organisation, you must repay it. This will have implications for any future applications or requests for funding. We may also review grants made to your organisation in the past.

3.5 Marketing and promotion

Raising awareness of EVAWG and the prevention outcomes of the Strategic Framework is fundamental to helping to realise the vision of “a changed society where women and girls are free from all forms of gender-based violence, abuse and harm - including the attitudes, systems and structural inequalities that cause them”.

The EVAWG team in TEO will support council staff across the region to work alongside successful projects to help maximise their impact and reach. This can include

promotional support and help with sharing stories of the difference your project is making. Additional guidance will issue to successful projects on the support available, which might, for example, include photography and filming. This guidance will include details on branding, logos and related requirements for all printed and other promotional materials developed by your project.

Your organisation's involvement in the Change Fund, both as an applicant to the fund and/or recipient of grant support, provides access to a wider EAWG network of CVS groups and other organisations working to end violence against women and girls. Further information will be offered to your organisation on ways it can connect with the insights shared across this network and become more involved with this growing EAWG coalition.

3.6 Breach of Letter of Offer and Claw-Back arrangements

If the Grant Purpose ceases to be carried out during the relevant Grant Period as a result of any act, omission or default on the part of the grant applicant organisation, including any breach of the terms and conditions contained within the Letter of Offer, the Council will invoke clawback procedures to demand that the applicant repays in part or full the Grant Funding awarded.

The applicant will be considered in breach of their funding offer if: the following apply – please note this list is not exhaustive:

- They provide misleading or inaccurate information, by accident or deliberate during the application process
- Members of the organisation funded, including volunteers and staff at any time during the project act dishonestly or negligently causing directly or indirectly any detriment to the activity or bring into disrepute the reputation of the Council by association through funding award(s)
- The organisation funded is in receipt of duplicate funding from any other source for any element of the activity
- The organisation does not take positive steps to ensure equality of opportunity in its employment practices, delivery of and access to services
- The organisation by their own actions makes their facilities and/or activities less inviting to any sections of the community
- There is a change of purpose, benefit, ownership or recipient, either during the project or within a reasonable period after its completion

Any reported or identified breaches or potential breaches that cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the Council will result in the grant award in part or in full being clawed back by the Council.

If funding is withdrawn or clawback procedures invoked the applicant organisation will have no legal redress to have funding reinstated. The decision of Council in this case will be final.

3.7 What happens if your application is ineligible/unsuccessful?

If your application is ineligible/unsuccessful for funding you will be notified via email. Feedback will be available on request.

3.8 Appeals Procedure

An appeals procedure will be available to unsuccessful applicants. For further information please contact the officers detailed at the end of this document.

3.9 Fraud and Corruption

The Council is committed to the prevention and detection of fraud and the promotion of an anti-fraud culture.

The Council operates a zero tolerance attitude to fraud and corruption, whether from internal or external sources. The Council requires staff and individuals/organisations that it deals with, to act with honesty and integrity, to safeguard the public resources and to report all suspicions of fraud and corruption.

Every case of alleged or suspected fraud will be thoroughly investigated in accordance with the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy, and where appropriate, referred to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). The Council will also seek to recover any loss suffered as a result of fraud and if appropriate, will take civil, and/or disciplinary action.

The following relevant policies can be located on the Council website:

Anti- Bribery Policy - April 2023

Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy - April 2023

Financial Regulations – April 2024

Fraud Response Plan - March 2023

Raising Concerns Policy – November 2023

The Council reserves the right to disallow any other current, pending or future grant applications and claims submitted by an organisation or an individual member of the organisation in respect of the financial year and to apply a moratorium on Council funding to any organisation or individual member of an organisation where fraudulent activity is identified within the current financial year and for at least 2 forthcoming financial years. This will also extend to individuals in receipt or applying for a bursary.

The Council will inform in writing the Chairperson of the organisation, or the individual in case of bursary, where fraud is suspected or has been identified. In the case of a

bursary where the recipient is under age of 18 years the parent/guardian will also be notified.

4.0 Application process

Applications open	Applications close	Assessment and Approval period	Notification of Outcome
Monday 26 January 2026	Monday 23 February	March 2026	April 2026

Applicants should note that this is a competitive process, and awards are subject to the availability of funds and may be subject to change.

Grant Information Sessions

Interested applicants should book a place at one the in person/online Grant Information Sessions where officers will take groups through the grant funding available as well as the new application forms and online process. For further information please visit Council's Grants and Funding webpage:

<https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/residents/grants-funding/>

Contact details:

For further information, please contact: Community Planning Business Support: E: cpbs@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk or The Funding Unit E: fundingunit@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk

T: 0300 123 4568

Appendix 1

1. General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council are entitled to disclose your details to other government agencies and departments and bodies engaged in distributing funds (subject to the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998, known as General Data Protection Regulations GDPR from May 2018).

In order to process your grant application, applicants are advised that:

- Council use the information you give us on the application form during assessment and for the life of any grant we award you to administer and analyse grants and for our own research.
- Council may give copies of this information to individuals and organisations we consult when assessing applications, when monitoring grants and evaluating the way our funding programmes work and the effect they have. These organisations may include accountants, external evaluators and other organisations or groups involved in delivering the project.
- Council may also share information with other departments, organisations providing match funding and other organisations and individuals with a legitimate interest in applications and grants, or for the prevention or detection of fraud.
- Council might use the data provided for our own research. We recognise the need to maintain the confidentiality of vulnerable groups and their details will not be made public in any way, except as required by law.