



Call for New Ideas



Information and FAQ Sheet

About Commonweal

Commonweal Housing is an independent social justice charity working to investigate, pilot and champion housing-based solutions to social injustice. By using our charitable resources, we support partner organisations to trial and test new and imaginative ideas and housing models designed to improve the lives of marginalised groups through our property-based pilot projects.

To bring property-based pilot projects to life, we work with social investors to buy property to lease to partners organisations, at a subsidised rent, to turn their models into reality. Projects typically span c.5-10 years, and we are committed to closely supporting our partners throughout a project's lifecycle. Collecting, analysing and sharing learning from projects is a vital part of Commonweal's work, and we fund independent evaluations of all our projects. Our partners will need to share this ambition to share learning helping to inform best practice and influence policy across the sector.

To streamline our work and resources, Commonweal currently focuses its projects into three broad thematic policy areas. These are:

- The migration, asylum and human trafficking systems
- Young people with difficult transitions into adulthood
- The criminal justice system

For more information on how we work please visit our website [here](#)

About Call for New Ideas

Call for New Ideas was set up by Commonweal in 2020 to enable organisations to design and deliver new and imaginative housing solutions to social injustice.

We ask not-for-profit organisations to come up with creative ideas for new housing and support models that seek to address a specific social injustice.

With the help of a judging panel, we will award up-to three applicants between £5,000-£10,000 in grant funding to conduct a feasibility study to assess the model's viability to launch as a property-based pilot project.

This part is crucial, as we want to work with organisations willing to develop their idea into a multi-year housing project in partnership with Commonweal.





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What is the focus?

This iteration of Call for New Ideas is exclusively focused on the migration, asylum, and trafficking systems.

To help guide our thinking for the Call we commissioned housing and migration specialist Professor Philip Brown to undertake horizon scanning research exploring the specific cohorts, and key areas where individuals are, at greater risk of housing injustice. The full report can be found [here](#).

In respect of the learnings from this research, we are **especially interested** in ideas for:

- Projects that address transition points between and within systems that drive housing insecurity (e.g. asylum to refugee status, the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) lifecycle, family reunification, unaccompanied minors to adulthood, and any other transition points your organisation identifies).
- Projects that seek to work with survivors of trafficking. For this purpose, we will consider projects for both non-UK and UK nationals, recognising that UK citizens are the most common nationality referred to the NRM, accounting for 25% of all potential victims as per [government figures in March 2024](#).
- We are very interested in proposed projects that aim to demonstrate possible long term cost savings benefits for the government. This could be achieved by focusing on community integration or employability support, as examples.

What are we looking for?

- All applications **must** require a property acquisition element, as the intention is for Commonweal to acquire property to deliver the project in partnership with you.

Imaginative ideas:

- The idea should be new and imaginative – this could be due to i. the client group; ii. the model; iii. the support element; iv. the location; or a mix of any of the above.
- Crucially, we are looking for ideas with a unique element that can provide new learnings for the sector through Commonweal funded evaluations during the pilot phase.
- For the application stage, we are looking for original ideas. The inner workings of your model will be determined in the feasibility study stage.



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A solid business case:

- All applications must outline the housing and support elements of the model. Your application must detail how your pilot could operate financially should it progress to pilot project stage.
- Your application must contain details around property-acquisition. This is important as Commonwealth operates by purchasing properties and leasing it to our partners. As such, a financially prudent business case is an important part of the feasibility study.
- We do not have an unlimited budget, and therefore will have an eye on value for money projects.

A committed, qualified and enthusiastic partner organisation:

- Partners must be a not-for-profit, but this can include local or combined authorities and we welcome applications from across the UK.
- We want partners who are committed to evaluating the project, sharing the learning and, where possible, seeking replication, as Commonwealth funds and commissions evaluations on all of our property-based pilot projects.
- Most importantly, we want partners who are enthusiastic about testing their housing solution as this will be **your** project.

What we're NOT looking for?

- Models that are already tried and tested where you work. Your idea must be doing something different, so please research the issue and model that you're proposing before you apply. If something similar exists but your idea has a different and unique element, please outline this within your application.
- Call for New Ideas is for new projects only, so we are not offering supplementary funding for existing projects.

What will we offer to qualifying applicants in return?

As well as funding the feasibility study, we offer our support, advice and expertise from start-to-finish. This includes:

- Answering any initial questions and running through your idea pre-application
- Support with the feasibility study process
- Managing property-acquisition and setting up your project with you
- Ongoing operational support and strategic input
- Commissioning of expert evaluation during the pilot phase
- On going support with capturing the learning and dissemination
- Communication, policy and replication support from Commonwealth staff.





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How to apply?

Organisations who wish to apply should download and complete the Application Form found on our website and return it via email to apply@commonweal.org.uk. **The window to apply is Monday 7th October until 5pm Monday 4th November 2024.**

Throughout November and December, Commonweal staff, Trustees, and sector experts will review the applications. We will inform all applicants of the outcome of their application in December, and are happy to provide feedback to applications that are unsuccessful upon request. If you have not heard from us about your application by 3rd January, please email apply@commonweal.org.uk.

FAQs

We highly recommend reviewing the following list of frequently asked questions before starting your application.

Does my organisation need to have housing management experience?

Applicants are not required to have experience in delivering projects involving housing. However, you must have the capacity to deliver your housing-based pilot project and applicants must outline in the Application Form how your project would operate, including the housing management element. If you are unable to take on the housing management role, you will need to identify a third party to undertake this role in the feasibility study stage.

I have an idea, but it's not related to Migration, Asylum, and Trafficking. Can I still apply?

This Call **exclusively** focuses on injustices around the migration, asylum, and trafficking fields so we would be unable to consider any ideas outside this area.

What is a feasibility study?

A feasibility study is a short-term piece of work that evaluates the viability of a new housing and support model that could solve social injustice. The most important part of the feasibility study is the business case, which outlines the financial viability of the proposed housing model by analysing the anticipated costs of delivering the model against the income (e.g., rental income) generated from the model. If a feasibility study suggests a project idea can deliver impact, learning and is financially operational, we want to support partners to make the project a reality.





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Can my organisation partner with another organisation to apply?

Yes, we accept joint applications.

Can my organisation submit more than one application if we have more than one idea?

Yes, you can submit a second application for a separate idea, and we will consider both ideas on their own merits.

My idea focuses on working with unaccompanied minors. Can I apply?

We are happy to accept applications for projects looking to house unaccompanied asylum seekers or refugees. **However, the cohort must be at least aged 16 or over.**

My idea is similar to existing provision but not delivered in my area/to this particular cohort/has a unique element to it, can I apply?

Yes, you would be able to apply if your idea has a unique element to it (whether it is unique for your area or unique in provision/delivery). However, you will need to make it clear in your application how your idea is unique and crucially, what would be learned from the evaluation of your new project.

Can I apply if I'm seeking funding for an existing service, evaluation, development/set-up of a property/service, or the acquisition of a building/licence?

Call for New Ideas is only able to fund feasibility studies looking into a housing-based acquisition model. We are not looking to provide further funding for activities or projects that are already established or in progress.

My organisation would need to utilise an external researcher to conduct part/all of the feasibility study. Does Commonweal have any researchers that they could recommend?

Applicants can come from all parts of the UK, and will have different backgrounds and project experience. As such, we would rather the applicant source and work with a third party researcher or consultant they themselves are comfortable working with.

If you have any more questions and/or would like to talk before submitting your application, please email apply@commonweal.org.uk to set up a call. We are not accepting applications until Monday 7th October but will be happy to answer questions before this date.

