

RESPONSE #108727176 SUBMITTED ON 29/03/18 10:38:46

WEF Voluntary Action Fund Online Application Form

Page 1 of 8 - Fund Name: Workplace Equality Fund

[Click here to name this section.](#)

1.1 Legal name of your organisation

Legal name of your organisation **Women Returners Ltd**

1.2 Registered address for your organisation


Address 1 **20-22 Wenlock Road**

Address 2 *No answer given*

Address 3 *No answer given*

Town / City **London**

Postcode **N1 7GU**

Email 


Website Address **www.womenreturners.com**

1.3 Main contact for this application


First Name **Hazel**

Last Name **Little**


Position **Coaching and Programme Manager Scotland**

Telephone 

Mobile *No answer given*

Email 

1.4 Bank account details

Name of Bank 

Account Name 

**REDACTED -
OUT OF SCOPE**

Bank Account Number

[REDACTED]

Sort Code

[REDACTED]

Number of signatories

[REDACTED]

<p>REDACTED - OUT OF SCOPE</p>

1.5 The legal status of your organisation

Legal Status **Company Limited by Guarantee**

Other *No answer given*

Charity No. *No answer given*

Is your organisation a branch of another charity/body? **No**

Company No. **90228108**

In what year was your organisation established? **2012**

1.6 Is your organisation a Social Enterprise?

Is your organisation a Social Enterprise? **No**

1.7 Annual income

What was the income of your organisation in its last financial year? **262209**

No answer given

1.8 Geographical area

In which local authority area is your registered office based? **Edinburgh**

1.9 What are the main aims and activities of your organisation?

What are the main aims and activities of your organisation?

Women Returners is a consulting, coaching and network organisation, founded in England in 2012 to enable professionals to return to work after an extended career break. We launched in Scotland in 2015 and won Scottish Government funding in 2017 to run a pilot cross-company returner programme, partnering with 13 financial services employers in Edinburgh & Glasgow.

We operate as a social business, with both commercial and social change goals. We pioneered the introduction of returnship programmes into the UK and have led the

successful development of a business-led returnship market. We have partnered with over 40 FTSE 250 clients and SMEs to design and run returner programmes. We also work with the public sector on taxpayer-funded projects including co-writing the just-launched "Returner Programmes: Best Practice Guidance for Employers" for the Government Equalities Office.

We are the experts at coaching professionals back into the workplace. Our Returner Coaching Programme accelerates returners' transition back into the workplace by addressing the practical and psychological barriers of returning to work.

We set up and run the Women Returners Professional Network, the only UK network community specialising in supporting returning professionals. The free network provides advice, information and inspiration centred on our online resource hub at womenreturners.com. We have over 4,000 subscribed members. We provide a range of return-to-work information, a plethora of resources from building confidence to writing back-to-work CVs, and inspirational returner success stories. We host returner events and ran successful events in Scotland as part of our returner programme.

1.10 Who are the people involved in your organisation?

How many Board members do you have? 1

How many volunteers are involved? *No answer given*

How many full-time staff are employed? 1

How many part-time staff are employed? 11

1.11 Describe the make up of your Board of Trustees/ directors.

Briefly tell us about their skills and experience.

Our corporate structure includes Julianne Miles who is Co-founder and Managing Director with sole legal responsibility for the company. We also have 3 operational directors who bring a wealth of experience and expertise.

Julianne Miles: Co-founder and Managing Director. Julianne is a Chartered Psychologist with an MBA with distinction from INSEAD and an MSc in Organisational Psychology. She is an acknowledged expert on returning to work and is a frequent commentator on returners in the media, at industry events and Government forums. Following a decade of senior level experience in corporate strategy and marketing, and a four year career break, Julianne retrained as a Chartered Psychologist. She has been supporting returning professionals through coaching, workshops and events since 2008 and co-founded Women Returners in 2012 both to develop a large-scale support community for returners and to develop the returner programme market.

Anna Johnstone: Director of Coaching & Development. Anna is an Occupational Psychologist with an MBA from IMD in Switzerland where she received the Welshe Award for top female candidate. Anna has held a number of senior Sales and Marketing roles, most recently as Commercial Strategy Director. She is an Executive Coach and workshop facilitator with extensive experience in supporting women returning to work.

Kate Mansfield: Relationship Director. Kate has a Masters in Organisational Behaviour from Birkbeck and a Postgraduate diploma in Career Coaching and Talent Management

from Kingston University. Kate's first career was in Executive Recruitment and Interim Management, and her last corporate role was as Director of the HR Practice at Alium Partners. Kate specialised in HR & Finance and was responsible for leading key corporate accounts across a wide range of industry sectors, including financial services, FMCG, technology and oil & gas. She re-trained as a Coach following her own career break and now coaches professional clients and facilitates group coaching.

Liz Mason: Client Director. Liz has an MBA from INSEAD. She most recently worked at London Business School (LBS) where, as Head of the Alumni Career Centre and led a team that delivered a range of services including career coaching, workshops and webinars, major recruitment events, an executive job board and extensive online resources, to support alumni across various career stages. She spent her earlier career in marketing, strategy and brand consultancy, based in London, Australia and Singapore.

1.12 Independent Referee

Name	[REDACTED]
Position	[REDACTED]
Organisation	[REDACTED]
Address 1	[REDACTED]
Address 2	[REDACTED]
Address 3	No answer given
Address 4	No answer given
Town	[REDACTED]
Postcode	[REDACTED]
Telephone	[REDACTED]
Email	[REDACTED]
Relationship to your organisation	[REDACTED]

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2.1 Name of project Returners to Business Services Scotland Programme

2.2 Project start/end date

Start date (dd/mm/yyyy) 01/05/2018

Project end date (dd/mm/yyyy) 31/03/2019

2.3 Briefly describe your proposed project The Returners to Business Services Scotland Programme will continue to grow the interest and appetite for business-led returner programmes in financial and business services in Scotland. Based on the success of our current programme, Returners to Financial Services Scotland (RFSS), we will work with new employers within financial services and also open up the opportunity to work with business services including legal, fintech and consulting employers.

The programme will enable 30-40 experienced professionals on an extended career break to get back into skilled employment at a professional level. Returners will take on a 12 week employer placement in Glasgow or Edinburgh with the possibility of ongoing employment, and will be provided with group coaching support from Women Returners addressing the challenges of returning to work including confidence-building, work-life balance, career planning and networking. 10 or more participating employers will be provided with consulting support from Women Returners, using our expertise in designing and running best-practice returnships which benefit both the organisation and the returner. Our consulting support also incorporates hiring manager guidance on tackling unconscious bias against women returners and line manager training to ensure a successful return for the participants on the programme.

Leveraging our learnings from the current cross-company programme, we will open up the programme for men and women to apply. Our research with PwC (2016) suggests that 90% of professional returners are women and therefore we expect a similar proportion of our participants to be women, our focus target group.

2.4 Participant Groups Women

2.5 Please describe the need or issue that your project will address, including evidence of need Women are under-represented in the Scottish financial and business services sector and returnships provide one solution. Funding support would enable us to build upon the success of our RFSS programme whilst expanding into business services, partnering with new employers to build awareness of the business case for returnships. The funding would lower the barriers for companies to pilot a programme, by reducing the cost and perceived risk for companies and by providing step-by-step expert support.

Benefits to participating companies:

Our approach with participating employers is to work with them to identify the business areas in which they have experienced hire recruitment needs and want to increase diversity, as this is what drives the business case.

Increasing diversity:

Women are under-represented at professional levels within financial and business services. The programme will help to build the numbers of women at these higher levels, by bringing experienced women back into professional level roles, accessing an

untapped high-calibre female talent pool for the sector. Returnships also help to improve gender diversity at other levels and refill the female talent pipeline to board-level roles. Returners enable organisations to increase age diversity, bringing in more mature and experienced employees, and 'cognitive diversity' as returners bring in a new perspective which encourages innovation within a team.

Accessing skilled talent:

Returnships will enable organisations to access a new talent pool to fill skills gaps in hard-to-fill areas. The success rate of 50-100% conversion to ongoing roles is evidence that returners are found to be a great source of talent once hiring barriers are lowered.

Benefits to women returners:

Around 75% of women want to return to work after career breaks and the majority find it difficult to do so. Our RFFS programme received over 450 applications which is indicative of the number of women who want to get back into work. This programme addresses the challenges faced by women by providing a clear route back to professional level roles with the opportunity for real work during the 12 weeks, enabling returners to refresh their skills, knowledge, experience and networks. Most participants secure an ongoing role and the remainder have CV-worthy experience to enable them to get a role elsewhere. The Returner Coaching Programme builds peer support and addresses the psychological and practical challenges of returning (see 3.2 for framework). In addition, through our events, a broader base of returners in Scotland will benefit from return-to-work workshops with advice and inspiration; many returners have relaunched their career from this support.

Benefits to Scottish Government policies and strategies and to economic growth:

The project supports Scotland's Economic Strategy priority of "promoting inclusive growth and creating opportunity through a fair and inclusive jobs market" (see 3.4).

Stimulating returnships will also help to reduce the gender pay gap (see 3.4).

The Financial and Business Services sector in Scotland contributes around £15m in GVA to the economy. Our project supports the continued success of the sector by providing a pipeline of diverse senior talent.

2.6 Please show how your project would pay due regard to the principles within the Fair Work Framework, namely Effective Voice, Opportunity, Security, Fulfilment, Respect.

Opportunity

- The 12 week professionally paid placement will provide suitable employment opportunities for experienced women to return to the workplace following a career break of 18 months or more. During the time on placement they will be able to refresh their skills, knowledge and undertake relevant training specific to their role. This may open up opportunities to permanent employment or springboard them onto another position elsewhere.
- Our events will provide opportunity for return to work support (100 women)
- Women Returners will consult with participating employers to ensure robust recruitment and selection procedures including addressing unconscious bias at interview stage
- Our programme will be inclusive to life stages including mature returners. In our current programme we had a number of applicants aged 50+ who were ready to return to work following a lengthy break
- The structure of our programme ensures that all participants will receive an internal mentor who will be able to guide and support them during their placement. They will also be linked to a buddy who is available to ask day to day questions. Alongside our Career Returners Coaching Programme, this ensures returners receive full support with their transition back to work.

Fulfilment

- The placement will make effective use of the skills and experience that the returners bring
- They will be performing real work and be able to make a difference during their time on the programme.
- We will work with the returners and employers to ensure goals are SMART, performance is measured and feedback is shared.

Respect

- We will ensure that family life is considered and supported during the placement. In our current programme we actively encouraged all employers to consider flexible working and arrangements were put in place with many participants to support their family commitments.

2.7 Will your project have a national or local remit?

Local

If it is local, please list local authorities in which your project delivery will take place?
Please select all that apply.

Edinburgh,Glasgow

3.1 Fund Outcomes

Outcome 1	Employment opportunities and progression in the workplace are improved for participant groups and consideration is given to how this can be embedded into the workplace to ensure lasting change
Outcome 2	Knowledge, skills, policies and practices are improved in order to address employment inequalities, discrimination and barriers/challenges within the workplace
Outcome 3	A more inclusive working environment is created and continued through employees and employers working in partnership

3.2 Describe the project activities to be carried out and any targets for these

Structured Project Stages

1. Gain organisational support and build group of at least 10 participating organisations offering 30-40 placements in total (May to September, led by Senior Project Manager).

Build awareness of both the Programme and the business benefits of returnships, using our proven case study based approach, within financial and business services firms in Edinburgh and Glasgow:

- Achieved through a media PR campaign, existing corporate contacts, new and existing relationships with professional bodies (ICAEW, SIO), and Scottish Government relationships and communication channels
- Will create a 'pull' rather than a 'push' approach to returnships to generate a sustainable model on an ongoing basis post-funding.

Learning from our current experience there are a number of factors outside of our control in terms of participant numbers, in particular business restructuring during the time of the project. With this in mind we have provided a range of between 30-40 placements which we will secure for returners.

2. Provide participating companies with returnship consulting (August - March, led by Consultant and Senior Project Manager).

Provide each company with a comprehensive toolkit for running a returnship. Run virtual sessions with participating companies to cover:

- Design: suitable work, pay levels, flexibility
- Promotion: effective returnship adverts
- Recruitment: addressing unconscious bias in women returner recruitment
- Support: induction, mentoring, additional training

3. Create demand from professional level returners (May to October, led by Senior Project Manager with support from PR consultant).

Build awareness of the Programme and returnships among the Scottish returner community. Achieved by a media PR campaign and by leveraging our existing professional network membership and relationships with professional bodies

4. Launch event (October, led by Consultant and Senior Project Manager in partnership with participating companies).

Run two free Programme launch events, in Edinburgh and Glasgow, at either Government premises or those of a participating company to manage cost base. Target audience will be 100 female financial and business services professionals on career break. Event will include return-to-work workshops, successful returner case studies, a Scottish Government speaker and participating returnship companies. The events will provide:

- return-to-work support, advice and inspiration to a large number of professionals at different stages of their journey back to work
- information and PR for the returnship, and an initial connection of returners with employers

Our launch events for our current programme gained very positive feedback from both the returners and the employers. "I found your event to be very professional and inspiring and has given me lots of food for thought regarding my return to work. It was encouraging to meet other women who have the same concerns about getting back into the workplace, I know I'm not alone." Quote from a returner participant.

Jamie Hepburn, MSP came to speak at our event and other Scottish Government attendees. Following our event we received comments that the event was the most professional, organised and inspiring event that they had attended for returners and that the levels of engagement from both the companies and the returners was extremely positive.

5. Advertise programme & recruit participants (October/November led by Senior Project Manager).

The programme will be sent out to our 4,000 network members and advertised on the Women Returners website, supported by our Twitter (1600 followers) and Facebook (1600 followers) accounts. Recruitment will be carried out by participating organisations to match with skills required and to maximise likelihood of ongoing roles after the returnship. Women Returners will co-ordinate and manage the assessment days to ensure an optimal candidate experience: providing 1:1 support to interviewees, putting in place an efficient and effective process and ensuring constructive feedback is given following interview (critical for any returner programme). "We are so proud to be part of this initiative and are so impressed by the candidates and how professionally it is being managed" Quote from an employer following our recent assessment day for current project.

6. Train line managers (December, delivered by Senior Project Manager & Women Returners Coach).

Provide a training webinar to line managers on supporting a returner through a returnship, including returner psychology and a practical checklist. "This really gives clear and concise guidelines. It helps me to focus on what I need to consider before our returner joins and how critical my role is during the programme." Quote from an employer following our line manager webinar.

7. Deliver returnship coaching support (January - March, delivered by Senior Project Manager & Women Returners Coaches).

Day-to-day work of the returner will be managed by the participating companies. Women Returners will provide transition support through their proven Career Returners Coaching Programme. This will be delivered through 4 half-day group coaching workshops, run separately for the Edinburgh and the Glasgow cohorts either at Government premises or those of a participating company, to strengthen peer support and networking.

Session One - Prepare

- Rebuilding professional identity and self-confidence
- Creating a positive mindset and tackling fears and doubts
- Navigating a returnship
- Action planning: set objectives & expectations

Session Two – Explore

- Developing sustainable work-life balance
- Developing proactivity
- Creating connections & building professional brand
- Review & issues to address

Session Three – Integrate

- Targeting future roles, including negotiating flexibility
- Coping with uncertainty
- Improving self-marketing skills (including interview skills if relevant)
- Review & issues to address

Session Four - Launch

- Achieving positive endings for programme
- Reviewing achievement and accomplishment of objectives
- Planning for the post-returnship future

8. Evaluate Programme and disseminate findings (March, led by Consultant and Senior Project Manager).

Prepare detailed evaluation report for Programme using survey and interview feedback of participating returners and employers.

3.3 How will you measure that the activities you plan to carry out are being achieved?

The Senior Project Manager will create a detailed project plan which will include all key milestones including targets and dates for the project. The project plan will be available to the SPM and Women Returners Director.

The SPM will monitor ongoing activity, and communication between the SPM and Director will take place on a weekly basis to ensure the project stays on track.

This approach has been very successful for our current programme and the SPM has kept the programme on track and delivered at each milestone, providing regular updates to the Scottish Government.

3.4 What difference/change will take place for the beneficiaries as a result of your project activities?

The impact on Scottish Financial and Business Services companies:

- Increase age and gender diversity by bringing in experienced, talented, mature talent into the organisation, creating a more inclusive working environment
- Improve the female talent pipeline within a sector in which women are under-represented
- Fill skill gaps by accessing a new talent pool of high calibre hard-to-reach professionals
- Reduce perceived risks of hiring returners by providing a trial period
- Improve the reputation of the companies involved by offering progressive workplace practices, in line with the Labour Market Strategy.
- Companies will experience the value of the programme from a business perspective and will be more likely to embed a returner programme into their annual talent strategy

The impact on Returners:

- Provides a clear route back to professional level work (not training/shadowing, real work)
- Provides the opportunity to refresh skills, knowledge, experience and networks
- Gives the opportunity to discuss flexible working arrangements at interview stage (we

actively encourage all employers we partner with to be open to flexible working arrangements)

- Accelerates and supports the back-to-work transition with Returner Coaching, mentoring, and a cohort peer support network
- Removes the barriers they normally face in recruitment, particularly due to the lack of recent experience. One of our current programme participants had been applying for jobs for 18 months with no offer to attend an interview; she was selected by 4 companies to interview for different roles within the programme. This is a strong indication of the barriers that returners face and evidence of how we are removing those barriers to ensure a successful return to the workplace
- Provides return-to-work support for approx. 100 women via our free launch events

Impact on Scottish economy:

- By getting women back into professional level roles with professional level pay, this will be a step towards reducing the gender pay gap. Hourly wages for well-qualified returners fall on average about 4% for each year out of employment (IFS, 2016). We work with companies to ensure that returnships are professionally paid and that participants' careers are re-established at the right pay level.
- Our research with PwC (2016) found that 2/3 of women may be working below their potential when they return after a long career break, creating an annual career break penalty for the UK economy of £1.7bn which this programme will help to address

3.5 How will you measure progress towards achieving the changes/difference made?

1) Drive PR activity with organisations and gain commitment for returnship opportunities - measured by partnering with at least 10 new employers to provide opportunities for returners.

2) Run 2 launch events (Edinburgh and Glasgow) to connect returners with employers and provide a free return-to-work workshop - measured by returner attendance, to enable 100 women receive the free return-to-work support, and by feedback on effectiveness. Following our recent launch event, a returner reported that she had secured employment within 4 weeks based on the support, tools and inspiration she received for her return to work.

3) Returnship placements - Measured by number and quality of placements: 30-40 professionally-paid placements opportunities at a level commensurate with returners' skills and experience

4) Programme design consultation with organisations - Measured by feedback on effectiveness at each of the consulting stages of the programme

5) Career Returners Coaching Programme - Measured by questionnaire feedback from programme participants on the effectiveness of the coaching in supporting their return to work transition

3.6 What will be the challenges of this project and how will you overcome them?

We are already partnering with 13 leading financial services companies which eliminates them from the pool of organisations that will participate in this programme. However, we have a number of companies [REDACTED] who were unable to participate due to strict timeframes and have expressed interest in joining any future programmes. We will also leverage our existing and new relationships with [REDACTED]

Reaching the returner talent pool - Returners are hard to find however we are continually growing our Scottish network which grew from 40 to 350 during our current programme.

We received over 450 applications for our current programme which is evidence of the returner talent in Scotland who want the opportunity to return to work. We will continue to work with existing and new connections with university alumni, professional member organisations and local schools to generate quality applications. We will also leverage social media advertising and PR activity which was proven successful in our current programme with interest from BBC Radio Scotland, BBC News, The Times, ITV news, Women in Business Finance and Institute of Directors.

3.7 How will your organisation work in partnership with other public, private and third sector organisations to achieve greater outcomes?

Women Returners will collaborate with professional organisations as previously listed, and with other family-friendly working organisations, to drive the appetite and raise awareness of this programme.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Women Returners will also collaborate with a variety of Scottish Government connections to deliver a successful project.

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4.1 How many staff will be employed on this project?

Staff Details



4.2 Tell us about the key duties, relevant skills and experience of staff to be funded by this project.

A dedicated Edinburgh-based Senior Project Manager (Hazel Little) will manage the project and provide participant coaching support on a 3 days a week basis for the duration of the project. Hazel is successfully managing our Returners to Financial Services Programme and will be able to transfer knowledge, experience, connections and learning to this programme. She brings 18 years' of HR experience in financial services sector, together with extensive experience in coaching returners back to work; she has also had her own 2-year parental career break.

Additional returner coaching support will be provided by an experienced and qualified Women Returners' coach.

Business consultancy on returnships will be provided by Julianne Miles, Co-founder and Managing Director of Women Returners to ensure full transfer of learning from the success of Women Returners returnships in England and the Returners to Financial Services Scotland Programme.

Together Hazel and Julianne have worked seamlessly to deliver the Returners to Financial Services Scotland Programme. Having a proven track record of delivering a very similar programme with Government funding provides positive reassurance of the ability to deliver another successful programme extending the reach within and beyond financial services.

5.1

Staff Costs (excluding Volunteer costs) [Redacted]

Volunteer Costs *No answer given*

Direct Project Costs [Redacted]

Contribution To Overheads [Redacted]

Total Grant Requested [Redacted]

5.2 Please tell us if there is anything we should know about the figures in the budget, include an explanation or breakdown to show how main costs were calculated. [Redacted]

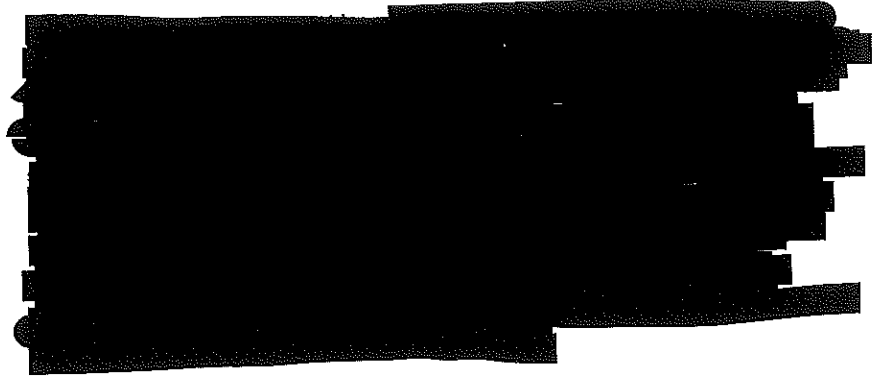
5.3 Is this project part of a bigger project? [Redacted]

5.4 Can the project go ahead without other funding if the project is part of a bigger project? *No answer given*

Please provide details: *No answer given*

5.5 When this funding ends how will the [Redacted]

grant continue to have a lasting impact?



State Aid

5.6 It is a requirement of public funding bodies to ascertain the State aid risk in any award of public funding. Are you currently in receipt of any awards or have you received an award in the past two fiscal years?



Other funding

5.7 Do you currently receive funding from another Scottish Government Fund?



If yes, please provide details of the funding you receive. Please include Date of Award, Amount and Name of fund



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- 6.1 Will your project mainly benefit people from a particular ethnic background? **No**
- A. White *No answer given*
- B. Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups *No answer given*
- C. Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British *No answer given*
- D. African *No answer given*
- E. Caribbean or Black *No answer given*
- F. Other ethnic group *No answer given*
- 6.2 Will your project mainly benefit people from a particular age group? **Yes**
- If yes, which age group? (Please select all that apply) **25-44 years,45-54 years,55-64 years**
- 6.3 Will your project mainly benefit disabled people? **No**
- 6.4 Will your project mainly benefit people of a particular gender? **Yes**
- If yes, which? (Please tick all that apply) **Women (including trans women)**
- 6.5 Will your project mainly benefit people who identify as transgender? **No**
- 6.6 Will your project mainly benefit people who are lesbian, gay or bisexual? **No**
- 6.7 Will your project mainly benefit people of a particular religion or belief? **No**
- If yes, which specific religion or belief? *No answer given*
- 6.8 Where did you hear about this fund? **Direct email**

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Name	Hazel Little
Position	Coaching and Programme Manager
Date (dd/mm/yyyy)	29/03/2018
Has this application been authorised by a Senior Management Committee member or a Trustee/Director of the Board?	Yes
Name of management committee member:	Julianne Miles
Position:	Managing Director

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A copy of your Memorandum and Articles of Constitution, or other governing document, signed and dated

[REDACTED]

Most recent independently examined or audited accounts, or verified statement of income and expenditure (if a new organisation, most recent bank statement)

[REDACTED]

A copy of your Equality and Diversity Policy if available

[REDACTED]

A copy of your vulnerable adult policy if your project is working with vulnerable adults

No answer given

Excel Budget Form (from section 5)

[REDACTED]

Attached Files

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]