



# Wooden Spoon

The children's charity of rugby

Sentinel House, Ancells Business Park, Harvest Crescent, Fleet GU51 2UZ  
Tel: 01252 773720 Email: [projects@woodenspoon.org.uk](mailto:projects@woodenspoon.org.uk)

## Wooden Spoon Project Criteria April 2026

Wooden Spoon's Vision Statement: "Through the power of rugby, every child and young person has access to the best life opportunities." Projects must fall within these aims.

If your project is in the UK or Ireland and shares our aim of making a positive impact on the lives of children and young people, it may be eligible for a Wooden Spoon grant. **NO GRANT IS APPROVED UNTIL A GRANT LETTER IS ISSUED.** The approval can only be given by Trustees with input from a number of people included the Regional Teams.

Wooden Spoon work on the basis of local funds for local projects and therefore available funds for project vary across the UK and Ireland. Should funds not be available to support projects will be advised. Your application will be held and if the situation changes we will contact you.

## Themes

Our work is shaped around four core themes: Giving children the chance to: Play, Learn, Thrive and Be Safe.

Across all four themes, we fund sensory rooms and gardens, specialist medical and sports equipment, playgrounds, sports programmes, health and wellbeing initiatives and education projects.

Working in partnership with local organisations and the rugby family, we create inclusive, safe environments, giving every child the chance to play, learn, thrive and be safe.

## Chance to Play

### Removing barriers to sport and inclusive play

- 3 out of 4 children with disabilities do not play sport at school

We fund inclusive playgrounds, sports facilities and programmes that enable children to be active, confident and connected, including initiatives such as the Wooden Spoon International Tag Rugby Festival (Tag Fest), which gives children with mild to severe learning difficulties the opportunity to take part in rugby, often for the first time, and experience a sense of belonging and teamwork.

[www.woodenspoon.org.uk](http://www.woodenspoon.org.uk)

Royal Patron: HRH The Princess Royal

Patron: [Rugby Football Union](#) [Scottish Rugby Union](#) [Welsh Rugby Union](#) [Irish Rugby Football Union](#) [Rugby Football League](#)

Wooden Spoon Society is a company Limited by Guarantee.  
Reg Office Address: Sentinel House, Ancells Business Park, Harvest Crescent, Fleet GU51 2UZ  
Company Reg No: 1847860

Wooden Spoon Society is a registered charity in England and Wales (Reg No: 326691) and in Scotland (Reg No: SC039247)



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## Chance to Learn

### Building confidence, life skills and learning opportunities

- 1 in 5 pupils in the UK are persistently absent from school

Pupils with no absences are 2.2x likely to achieve 5+ good GCSE grades. We support projects and programmes such as **The School of Hard Knocks** that equip children and young people with essential life skills and supportive learning environments through the sport of rugby.

## Change to Thrive

### Supporting mental health, wellbeing and basic needs

- 30% of children in the UK live in poverty
- 1 in 5 children experience a mental health issue
- 1 in 5 children in the UK are neurodivergent

Our grants tackle the challenges preventing children from thriving, including food poverty, caring responsibilities, bereavement and mental health recovery. Through initiatives such as Pass the Plate and programmes like The Wave Project, we help reduce hunger, isolation and anxiety while building confidence and resilience. Since 1983, we have funded over 100 sensory spaces across the UK and Ireland, investing £4.6 million and supporting more than 202,000 beneficiaries

## Chance to Be Safe

### Safeguarding, prevention and protection from harm

- Roughly 15% to over 25% of students have experienced cyberbullying, with studies showing an upward trend over time.
- 1 in 13 children have a diagnosed food allergy, whilst 60% of UK schools do not provide staff training on allergy management. This results in children living with food allergies being unsafe, unprotected and vulnerable in school leading to social exclusion and negative wellbeing.

Children face increasing risks from online bullying, exploitation, loneliness, knife crime, gangs and substance misuse, and suicidal tendencies. We fund projects that promote safeguarding, raise awareness, provide early intervention and support rehabilitation, ensuring children and young people feel protected and secure.

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## **Beneficiaries:**

The project must enhance and support the lives of children and young people with a cognitive age under 25 that are disadvantaged physically, mentally, or socially.

The project must work directly with children and young people and have a positive influence on their lives from the activities or service provided.

The beneficiaries must be in UK or Ireland.

The project beneficiaries must be a group. Wooden Spoon cannot make grants to individuals.

## **The Project**

### **Capital Project**

If a project is a physical, tangible asset, of a permanent nature the following must apply:

- Must have a minimum predicted life-span of five years (preferably ten years), be non-transferable and of a permanent nature.
- Grants will not be considered for salaries, administration costs, professional fees and on-going overheads related to a capital project.
- Should the project location be a Leasehold property the unexpired term of the lease must exceed 5 years from completion.
- Wooden Spoon will request information from you at a minimum after 1, 2 and 5 years so we can measure the impact of our donation. Further information may be requested at other times not just as above.

### **Revenue Project**

If a project is educational, health and wellbeing or disability sports focused the following must apply:

- There must be a key educational, sporting or physical activity element preferably rugby to engage children and young people
- Must have a clearly defined project brief to include detail on: description of project need and objectives, stakeholders, description of participants (age, gender, geography), recruitment of participants, project activity and budget, legacy planning, monitoring and evaluation and finally reporting to Wooden Spoon
- The project must have a defined timescale/timetable which should be for a period of at least 12 weeks
- Grants will be considered for kit and equipment, salaries and administration costs

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- Wooden Spoon will request information from you at the end of the project so we can measure the impact of our donation. Further information maybe requested at other times not just as above.

## Grant Amount:

There is neither a minimum nor a maximum grant level. However, it is unlikely that a project of a physical nature that is under £2,000 will have sufficient substance and scale to qualify under the 'projected lifespan' rule. Wooden Spoon's contribution may be up to 100% of the cost, though beneficiary organisations will be encouraged, where practicable, to raise a 20% of the project costs.

If the grant is £50,000 a legal charge on an asset of the applicant will be required during the 5 year period from completion of the project. The process to obtain the charge will start on the issue of the grant letter.

The grant must be spent within a 12 month period from the issue of the grant letter. If this is not the case the grant could be revoked. If a project is delayed due to outside factors Wooden Spoon will work with the applicant to overcome the time issues. An applicant could apply at an additional time if they wish.

Wooden Spoon will aim not to grant an amount that would include an element of VAT. The applicant should confirm that VAT will be recovered.

## Recognition and Publicity

For brand recognition purposes all Projects should have the facility of being named (e.g. 'The Wooden Spoon Playground'). Wooden Spoon's supporters can then recognise their contribution within their local communities and general awareness of Wooden Spoon can be increased. This badging will normally be in the form of a wall-mounted plaque and will be organised by National Office.

Photographic and public relations opportunities should also be taken, where possible. Links to the social media systems between both parties is expected. The provision of the grant and the benefits achieved must be shown on the applicant website and other social media during the period of 5 years to completion. Wooden Spoon will be contacting the applicant for additional regular progress updates Except in rare, justified circumstances, beneficiaries of grants are expected to cooperate in appropriate publicity for the project as it progresses and to allow subsequent occasional pre-arranged access for employees of Wooden Spoon's significant corporate sponsors. This activity helps to raise the Wooden Spoon profile and increase funds for project expenditure.

Wooden Spoon will provide suggest paragraphs to be shared by the applicant to share with your supporters, parents, groups associated organisations and other groups. Details of the materials and/or a copy of the publication should be provided to Wooden Spoon.

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## Grant Use:

Grants from Wooden Spoon are for the sole purpose of the project and must not be retained or used for any other purpose without the prior agreement of Wooden Spoon.

Wooden Spoon's commitment to a grant remains subject to the raising of funds, although we plan our commitments accordingly.

Should the purpose that the grant is provided change, stop or the organisation ends then a proportion of the grant will be repayable. The values will be outlined in the termination schedule of grant letter.

## Monitoring and Evaluating:

Applicants are expected to monitor and evaluate the ongoing performance of the project by providing a case study incorporating (before, during, and after where relevant) photographs and highlighting the benefits that it has brought to an individual member of the user group.

Please note that we will use these photos and case studies on our website and in other marketing literature to promote the projects Wooden Spoon funds (see Publicity below). Applicants should therefore ensure that they have all the right permissions for this information before sharing it with us.

## Organisations:

Wooden Spoon can only make grants to organisations with a legal status. For example; schools, charities, and clubs.

We can fund applications from groups working in partnership, but one organisation must take the lead for the application and be the primary beneficiary and point of contact.

We do not accept multiple applications from the same organisation while an application is being considered, unless the organisation is working in partnership, as stated above.

We do not usually accept applications where a body has been successful in obtaining a grant within a period of 5 years from the date of the original grant.

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## Financial Sustainability:

We encourage our projects to be sustainable. It is the responsibility of applicants supported by Wooden Spoon to identify localised funding streams to ensure sustainability of the activities and that the project continues to be delivered for the benefit of disadvantaged children and young people with a cognitive age under 25.

We do review the financial results/reports of the applicant as part of our due diligence, and we are unlikely to grant funds where an organisation have large reserves that are uncommitted.

## Payment Schedule:

Wooden Spoon would normally expect to make funds available in a single payment to the applicant organisation upon receipt of confirmation that the project has been completed in line with the grant application and as outlined in the Wooden Spoon grant letter, copy invoices from the supplier to the applicant organisation and proof of bank account. Wooden Spoon will make its grant payment by BACS transfer, usually within 14 days of receiving the claim for payment.

## Safeguarding:

Organisations should expect to demonstrate they have policies in place to protect children and young people in their care whilst also supporting their development. In addition, the safeguarding and child protection policies should be in line with the policies adopted by Wooden Spoon.

## Membership:

Subject to the application being approved by Wooden Spoon Trustees, we invite one new Wooden Spoon membership to be taken out by a representative of the applicant organisation for a period of five years, allowing us to keep them informed of our charitable activities.

## Minibuses:

Whilst Wooden Spoon does not actively encourage the funding of minibuses, as this requirement is well supported by other charities, consideration will be given to applications where it can be shown that the minibus could not be funded by any other charity and that the high visibility of such a mobile unit in a region would bring added benefits to Wooden Spoon in raising the level of awareness of Wooden Spoon within the local community.

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## Contractors and Suppliers:

Wooden Spoon does not recommend contractors or suppliers. If applicants wish to discuss appointing suitable contractors or suppliers they are welcome to speak to organisations who have received previous grants for projects similar to their own.

For more information, please contact the Projects team on 01252 773720.

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To be reviewed April 2027

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