



**coramVoice**   
getting young voices heard

 **COMMUNITY**  
FUND

 **A NATIONAL VOICE** Amplified by Care Experience

# Application Guidance

Find guidance here for submitting your project idea.

**2026**

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# Introduction

Thank you for your interest in **Amplified by Care Experience (ABCE)**, a new national project led by Coram Voice's A National Voice and funded by the **National Lottery Community Fund**.

This project will identify strong youth-led initiatives created by children in care councils, care-experienced groups and local authorities, and support them to grow. The aim is to take the best local ideas and help them reach more care-experienced young people across England.

If you've ever seen a great project in another area and thought it should exist everywhere, this is your chance to make that happen. Amplified by Care Experience is all about taking what already works well locally and helping it grow nationally so more young people can benefit.

## About the project

Amplified by Care Experience has been designed to celebrate and amplify youth-led work. We know there are brilliant local projects improving the lives of care-experienced young people every day. However, these ideas often stay within one local area.

Through this project, we want to help share those ideas across the country. Selected projects will receive support from Coram Voice and A National Voice Ambassadors to adapt, grow and share what they have achieved in ways that suit different local areas.

Our goal is to:

- Strengthen youth participation and leadership
- Support projects that are creative, inclusive and achievable
- Build stronger networks between local areas
- Create a connected community by linking local and national ambassadors to share learning, ideas and support
- Reduce the postcode lottery of care experiences by making sure what works well in one place can work elsewhere

# Who can apply

Applications will be open to:



- Local authorities and participation teams that run or support youth-led projects
- Independent or partner organisations working with care-experienced young people in England

Projects must have clear youth involvement and be based on something that has already been developed or tested in practice.

Applications cannot be made by individuals. However, all applications must show how young people are central to the project's planning, delivery and decision-making.

## Timeline



Date	Key milestone
<b>January 2026</b>	Applications open and full guidance shared
<b>February 2026</b>	Shortlisting begins with support from ANV Ambassadors
<b>May 2026</b>	Shortlisted projects presented at Amplify national event
<b>June 2026 onwards</b>	Three projects selected to receive support
<b>Summer to Winter 2026</b>	Projects begin the amplification and support phase

During the support phase, Coram Voice will work closely with each project to help adapt their ideas, connect them with other local authorities, and share their learning nationally.

# Time Commitment

If selected, your team will need to commit dedicated time to developing and delivering your project in collaboration with the national team. Key commitments include:

- **Monthly:** Meet with your local group of young people at least once a month to plan, deliver and reflect on your project
- **Every 2 months:** Take part in check-in calls or meetings with the national team to stay connected and supported
- **Quarterly:** Join peer-learning sessions with other project teams to share progress and ideas
- **Annually:**
  - Take part in a 12-month project evaluation visit with the Coram Voice team
  - Attend the national **Amplify** event in May, where projects will share learning and progress with other teams and professionals
- **Ongoing/ad hoc:** Be responsive to occasional surveys, invitations to showcase your work or other national opportunities as they arise

We'll provide scheduling support and flexibility to make this manageable around your existing commitments, but it's important that teams are ready to commit this time from the outset.



# The application process

## Step 1: Read the guidance

All applicants should read this document carefully to understand the project purpose and expectations.

## Step 2: Prepare your application

You will be asked to describe your project, who it supports, and how it is led by young people. You should include evidence of what impact the project has already had and how it could grow in other areas.

## Step 3: Submit your application

Applications will be submitted through an online form.

## Step 5: Shortlisting

Shortlisting will be done by A National Voice Ambassadors, care-experienced young people aged 16 to 25, using the acceptance criteria developed by the group.

## Step 6: Amplify event

Shortlisted projects will be showcased at our annual Amplify event in May 2026, where young people from across England will take part in selecting the final projects to receive support.

## Step 7: Project support

The three selected projects will work with Coram Voice to share and expand their ideas nationally. Each project will be encouraged to identify and support their own local ambassadors to help deliver and champion their work locally.

# Support for selected projects

Projects that are selected will receive tailored support from Coram Voice and the ANV team. This may include:

- Guidance on how to adapt and grow your project for new areas
- Help with planning and evaluation
- Support with communications and storytelling
- Opportunities to share your learning through events and media
- Links to networks of care-experienced young people and professionals



## Funding

Each selected project will also receive a **funding allocation** to help bring their ideas to life. This funding can be used for things like travel and accommodation to attend any meetings or events we plan (we will let you know which these are), as well as to help you share or present your project. For example, you might use the grant to cover the cost of a videographer to promote your project, creative materials for art or design, or to create a sample version of your idea, such as an example welcome pack.

Our aim is to make sure projects stay youth-led while receiving the right support to thrive in new places.

## Policy support

Selected groups will also receive support from a policy professional who has expertise in national policy and legislation affecting children in care and care leavers. They will help explore how your project could have an impact on a wider, national scale. This support will give you the chance to ask questions, understand how your idea connects to current policy, and think about how it could influence change beyond your local area.

# Support for selected projects

## Working in partnership

Local project teams are not just submitting an idea, they will become key partners in delivering the national Amplified by Care Experience project. This means both the national and local teams have responsibilities to make the project a success. To support this, we will provide a simple working agreement template that teams can use to set clear expectations. It can be signed by both young people and professionals to help everyone stay on the same page and understand their roles and shared commitments from the start.

## Creating a positive and safe space

We want all selected projects to feel supported, heard and valued. As part of this, we will work closely with each team to help create a positive environment where care-experienced young people feel safe and confident to share their ideas. This includes building trusting relationships, offering flexible ways to contribute and meeting teams where they are. Emotional safety is just as important as practical safeguarding and we are committed to supporting both.



# Youth involvement

## Local ambassadors

As part of the project, we expect successful groups to recruit, support and retain a cohort of local ambassadors who will play a central role in developing and sharing their local idea. Each shortlisted group will be responsible for managing and supporting their local ambassadors individually, ensuring they are meaningfully involved throughout the project.

Each local authority will receive the same amount of funding, and we recommend recruiting a group of at least **four ambassadors**. The grant you receive is designed to support this number. If you decide to involve more young people, that's absolutely fine, but please note that additional funding will not be available, so any extra costs will need to be managed locally.

There will also be opportunities for local ambassadors to connect and network with the national ANV Ambassadors, as well as with young people from other local projects. We hope this will help build a stronger, connected community of care-experienced young people driving change together.

## A National Voice Ambassadors

We have also recruited a group of A National Voice Ambassadors, part of A National Voice, the national children in care council for England. They will support us directly in the design and delivery of this project. A National Voice Ambassadors will play a key role in shortlisting and selecting successful projects, alongside professionals.

They will also connect and network with local ambassadors, helping to shape project support, share learning and bring a national, care-experienced perspective to the work. Local ambassadors may see this as a role they could aspire to take on in the future.

# Application format

All applications must be submitted as a **PowerPoint presentation**.



Your PowerPoint is the main way you will share your project idea, show youth voice, and demonstrate how your project meets the acceptance criteria. **The PowerPoint must be co-produced with care-experienced children and young people** and clearly evidence their involvement. Information about professional support, lead practitioners and organisational details will be collected separately through the SmartSurvey form.

## Creative formats you can use

Your PowerPoint can include:

- Text
- Images or graphics
- Posters or visuals embedded within slides
- Embedded videos or audio clips (where relevant and accessible). **Max 5 minutes total of audio and video content.**



This is a creative opportunity to bring your project to life while clearly addressing the acceptance criteria.

## What your slides should cover

Your PowerPoint should reflect the acceptance criteria (**see page 12**), as well as the following:

- Your project idea and what it does
- How young people have led and shaped the project
- Evidence of youth voice
- The difference the project makes
- Why and how the project could work in other areas
- How young people are supported and recognise



## Length and structure

To keep the process fair and manageable for everyone, your PowerPoint must meet the following requirements:

- Maximum length: **4 slides**
- Recommended word limit: no more than **250 words** per slide. **1,000 words overall.**
- Slides should be clear, focused and not text heavy

## Accessibility and readability

Your PowerPoint must be accessible and easy to read:

- Minimum font size: **18pt**
- Text must be clear, legible and high contrast
- Avoid overcrowded slides
- Videos or audio should be purposeful and accessible (captions where possible).

**Max 5 minutes total of audio and video content.**



Accessibility is part of creating inclusive and safe participation, and this will be taken into account when reviewing applications.

## What we will and will not accept

- The PowerPoint must be created with **care-experienced young people**.
- We will only assess the content included **within** your PowerPoint.
- We will **not accept** additional documents, links or written explanations **outside** of the PowerPoint.
- Your PowerPoint must be no more than **4 slides** in total and no more than **1,000 words** overall (maximum of **250 words** per slide).
- Slides must use a minimum font **size of 18** for accessibility. PowerPoints that exceed these limits **will not be accepted**.



# Acceptance criteria

All applications will be reviewed and scored using a set of acceptance criteria that help us decide which projects are ready to be supported through Amplified by Care Experience. Your application and PowerPoint presentation will be reviewed by professionals alongside A National Voice Ambassadors, who are care-experienced young people aged 16 to 25.

The criteria outline the main things we are looking for in a strong application and will be used to guide both the shortlisting process and final selection at the Amplify event. **Some criteria will be evidenced through the PowerPoint created with young people, while others are collected through the application form.**

Your application will be scored against these points, so addressing them clearly will make your submission stronger.

- **Youth-Led and Co-Produced:** Your project should be clearly led and co-created by care-experienced young people. This means young people should have shaped the project idea from the beginning, rather than responding to an idea decided by adults. *(Evidenced in the PowerPoint created with young people)*
- **Evidence of Youth Voice:** We want to see proof that young people have been actively involved. This could include quotes from young people, videos, short case studies, or other evidence that shows their voice is at the centre of your project and the application. *(Evidenced in the PowerPoint created with young people)*
- **Clear Benefit and Impact:** Your application should show what difference the project makes. How will it improve the lives of care-experienced young people? What changes do you hope to see, and how will you know if they've happened? You can use stories, outcomes, or early data if the project is already running. *(Evidenced in the PowerPoint created with young people)*

# Acceptance criteria

- **Scalability (can others use it?)**: Tell us more about why you'd like to see your project grow beyond your area. This might mean other areas could replicate it, or that it could influence change nationally.  
*(Evidenced in the PowerPoint created with young people)*
- **Project Readiness**: Your project should be more than just an idea. Ideally, it's already happening in some form, or it has a clear plan in place. We want to see that thought and preparation has gone in even if it's in its early stages.  
*(Evidenced in the PowerPoint created with young people)*
- **Support and Sustainability**: We need to see that there is support in place to help deliver and grow your project. This includes staff who can support the work and local leadership or management who are backing it. Your project should have the capacity to keep going if selected. *(Evidenced in the application form)*
- **Inclusive and Safe**: Your project must be inclusive and create a safe, positive space for everyone involved. Consider how you will include quieter voices or those less confident. What safeguarding is in place and is there a range of engagement methods being used? *(Evidenced in the application form)*
- **Recognition and Reward**: Care-experienced young people involved in leading your project should be recognised and benefit from their involvement. This could be through skill-building experiences or more formal rewards like vouchers, expenses, meals, food during participation, or accreditation. *(Evidenced in the application form)*

# Acceptance criteria

Use this short list to double check that your application covers all the essential points.

- The application clearly demonstrates young people have shaped the project idea
- The application includes youth voice (e.g. quotes, videos, or case studies)
- The application explains the intended benefit and impact
- The project could be shared or adapted in other areas
- The project is already running or has a clear plan to begin
- There is support from staff or local leadership to help deliver and sustain the project
- The project is inclusive and ensures a safe, positive space for young people
- Young people involved will be recognised or rewarded for their time and contribution

If you've ticked yes to each point, you're good to go!



# Measuring impact

We know that a project's success can be shown in many ways. Impact is about evidence of how your project has made a positive difference to those involved. This can include:

- First-hand feedback from young people, such as quotes, stories or reflections on how the project helped them
- Evidence from professionals or carers who have seen positive changes in young people's confidence, engagement or relationships
- Data or observations that show improvement, such as increased participation over time, better attendance at groups or young people moving into education, employment or volunteering
- Wider community impact, such as influencing local practice, improving services or inspiring new ideas in other teams

You do not need complicated research or formal evaluation to show impact. What matters most is that you can tell us more about how your project is making a difference and what others could learn from it.

If your project is still growing or early in development, you can share how you plan to measure impact in future. This might include collecting young people's feedback, keeping records of participation, or using simple before-and-after reflections.

Strong applications will show both the change that has already happened and the potential for further impact as the project grows.

## Evaluation Support

We will also be supporting shortlisted groups with evaluation in a structured way. This means we will provide tools, guidance and opportunities to reflect on your project's progress, learning and outcomes. While we are asking about impact as part of the application process to help us understand your idea and its potential, you will not be expected to do this alone. We will work alongside you to measure and share your impact as the project develops.

# Submitting your application

When applications open, all forms and guidance will be available on the Coram Voice website. You will be able to complete your application online.

Before submitting, make sure you have:

- Read through all sections of this guidance
- Shown clearly how young people are involved and leading the project
- Included evidence or examples of the project's impact so far
- Addressed each part of the acceptance criteria
- Explained how your project could grow or be shared in other areas
- Demonstrated senior buy-in and support for your application, for example from managers, service leads or directors

**Applications must be submitted by the closing date shown on the website. Late applications cannot be accepted.**

Once applications close, all submissions will be reviewed by A National Voice Ambassadors using the acceptance criteria. Shortlisted projects will then be invited to take part in the Amplify event where the final three projects will be selected.

If you have questions while completing your application, you can contact the A National Voice team at [ANV@coramvoice.org.uk](mailto:ANV@coramvoice.org.uk) for support.

We are excited to see your ideas and to work with you to amplify youth-led projects that are making care better for children and young people across England.

**Start your application now.**

**Closing date: 27 February**



# Applicant webinar

To help you prepare your application, we will be hosting an [Amplified by Care Experience Applicant Webinar in January](#).

This session will:

- Explain the project in more detail and walk through the guidance pack
- Go over the application process step by step
- Give examples of what makes a strong youth-led project
- Offer tips on how to show impact and meet the acceptance criteria
- Include time for questions from applicants

We strongly encourage anyone planning to apply to attend. It will be a useful chance to hear directly from the A National Voice team, understand what we are looking for, and feel confident before submitting your application.



**Closing date: 27 February**