

# Big Local partnerships

A Big Local partnership is a group of at least eight people who guide the overall direction of Big Local in your area. The majority (at least 51%) of partnership members are people who live within your Big Local area. The partnership is responsible for agreeing a shared vision, creating the Big Local plan, overseeing its delivery, collecting evidence to show how the plan is progressing, and reviewing the plan and partnership to make sure they are working in the best way possible.

## What the partnerships do

The partnership is a way for people locally to provide recommendations in good faith about how their area can be improved. So the way it comes together and works is really important in making sure that Big Local is a genuinely local, resident and volunteer-led programme.

The role of the partnership is to:

- bring together the community's views, and make the overall decisions about how Big Local will work in your area and how to use your £1m
- ensure Big Local is resident-led and that people across the Big Local area have a genuine and continuing opportunity to be involved
- work with the locally trusted organisation(s) to ensure the Big Local plan is carried out
- review the plan, in order to create a follow-on plan for future years
- connect with local organisations, businesses, public agencies, councillors and others who can deliver activities and help make Big Local a success
- work with your rep and locally trusted organisation(s) to achieve the vision you have set for your Big Local area.

## What we expect of Big Local partnerships

Our expectations are set out in the [Memorandum of Understanding](#). Broadly, we expect partnerships to:

- encourage a range of people in your area to be involved, in a thoughtful, inclusive, open and meaningful way
- operate openly and transparently, which means involving others and recording and communicating how decisions are made
- behave in line with Big Local values and ethos, as well as the locally agreed code of conduct and governing arrangements
- manage any conflicts of interest effectively and report any potential misuse of funds to Local Trust.

We also expect you to have locally agreed policies and procedures that are right for your area, such as a code of conduct, declaration of interest, and loyalty policy.

We do expect that you take care of yourselves and each other in undertaking any Big Local activity. This means contributing only what you are able to and not over-burdening yourselves, as well as bringing other people in to share the load.

For more details on appreciating volunteers please see our guidance on [volunteering](#).

## Delivering Big Local and distributing funding

In most areas Big Local partnerships do not directly hold or distribute the Big Local funding. Instead, money is transferred from Local Trust to your locally trusted organisation(s) to meet the immediate costs of your Big Local plan.

As a Big Local partnership, you are not expected to deliver your Big Local plan yourselves. But you are expected to have oversight of it - in other words, to choose and monitor your locally trusted organisation. So you need to be comfortable with the process for agreeing who will deliver services and activities in line with your plan.

If you and other members of the partnership are interested in either delivering activities or being your own locally trusted organisation we have further guidance on [Partnerships becoming their own locally trusted organisation](#) and [Different approaches to being a Big Local partnership](#).

## Criteria for Big Local partnerships

Each partnership is designed to reflect the specific needs and characteristics of your area and will therefore be unique. However, each partnership must meet these criteria:

- It must have at least eight members
- The majority (at least 51%) of members should live within the Big Local area's boundaries
- Members should reflect the range and diversity of people who live in your area - for example, in relation to age, ethnicity, gender, faith, disability or income levels.

Please note that we ask members of the Big Local partnership to participate 'in their own right', which means they cannot represent the views of any other person or organisation.

As long as you meet these criteria, your partnership can take different forms and should be designed to best suit your area. The partnership's name, membership and structure are also flexible.

## How we endorse your partnership

Each Big Local partnership signs an agreement with us setting out their role and responsibilities to Big Local. This agreement is called the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and is standard across all areas. It includes a list of members, and a map with the agreed boundaries for your Big Local area.

When you are ready to submit your partnership for us to endorse, please complete our online form on [Big Local Community](#). Tell us how many members of the partnership there are, how many of those are local residents, how the chair was selected and what the structure of the partnership is. Your chair also needs to sign and send in a copy of the MOU, which you can download [here](#).

Before we endorse your Big Local partnership, we check that it meets our criteria by speaking to your rep and your chair.

When we have endorsed your partnership our chief executive will counter-sign the MOU document and send a copy to your chair in the post.

# Reviewing your Big Local partnership

We know that membership of your partnership will change over time, as new people join and others step back. So, once we have endorsed your partnership, we ask your Big Local rep to submit updated information about it between September and December each year. This is to make sure we know who is in the Big Local partnership and that it continues to meet the criteria.

## How to review your partnership

How you choose to review your Big Local partnership is up to you, and you should do this in line with your locally agreed policies and procedures. But you and your rep will be required to respond to these questions:

- How many partnership members are there?
- How many of these members are residents?
- Does the partnership reflect the Big Local area?
- Is the partnership behaving in line with the Big Local values and ethos?
- Is the partnership following locally agreed procedures, including a code of conduct?

## How you can use the review

The partnership review provides you with an opportunity to review:

- to what extent you reflect your Big Local area
- your needs for development and support
- whether your structure and ways of working are a good fit for your Big Local area.

Your Big Local rep will submit your partnership review to us. If your partnership no longer meets our criteria, you and your rep will need to tell us what you are doing to meet them, and your timeline for achieving this.

## What support is available

We know from the experiences of Big Local partnerships that things don't always go to plan and that support is essential. You have two main resources:

1. Your rep, your locally trusted organisation(s) and your partners are an important source of advice and practical support. Partnerships can and should budget for training and volunteer costs to enable residents to take part. This could include the cost of a reasonable meeting space and refreshments for the group.
2. Local Trust regularly releases details of training courses and learning events. Check, our website [localtrust.org.uk](http://localtrust.org.uk) for details, and see our guidance on [Support and funding available to Big Local areas](#).

This document will be developed over time with input from the people using this material.

If you have thoughts on how this document can be made more useful for you, particularly if you live in one of the Big Local areas, please let us know.

Local Trust

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The endowment for the Big Local programme is held by the Big Local Trust and overseen by Local Trust. The Big Local Trust was established by the Big Lottery Fund with a National Lottery grant of £196,873,499.

**If you need this document in other formats or a community language please get in touch with Local Trust and we will help you.**

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