# AWN response to the National Lottery Good Causes consultation.

RESPONSE TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT'S CALL FOR EVIDENCE, NATIONAL LOTTERY GOOD CAUSES: FUND WHAT MATTERS TO YOU (CLOSING 23 SEPTEMBER 2026).

**ALL WAYS NETWORK**

# Access to funding begins before an application form

Small charities serving Muslim communities need **more than simpler application forms**. They need **clear information** about funding **sources,** proportionate acknowledgement **requirements** and a **meaningful say** in how funding works.

AWN's response brings together evidence from our charity survey, consultation through an open discussion with grassroots organisations, and our wider experience supporting charities serving Muslim communities.

## Why this matters:

For some Muslim-led charities, the first questions arise before they consider applying**: can they accept gambling-derived funding, where does a particular grant come from, and what would displaying Lottery branding communicate to their communities?** These are separate questions.

A charity may be willing to accept a grant but concerned that prominent branding will be understood as endorsing gambling. Others may decide that they cannot accept the funding at all.

**Clear information matters,** but religious concerns should **not** be treated simply as **misunderstandings to correct.**

Charities willing to apply also face **practical barriers:** finding suitable **opportunities,** limited fundraising **capacity** and the **time** needed to prepare applications.

The review must ask what **funders** need to **change**, alongside what **support applicants need.**

# What charities told us:

Charities also told us that **flexibility on branding** affects whether they **apply at all.** Several identified this specifically as a change that would encourage applications: public association with gambling can raise questions of **community trust** even where trustees are willing to accept the grant itself.

Where an application was unsuccessful, charities wanted more than a rejection. **Clearer feedback** on funding decisions would let them judge whether to revise a proposal, apply again, or spend their limited time elsewhere.

**Access is only half the story**, though. In our grassroots discussion, charities valued funding officers who **understood their work** and the **credibility** a Lottery grant could bring, but they also raised what happens after: **simpler processes, micro-grants** to test ideas, **upfront payments** where reserves are thin, and **support** to sustain effective work once a grant ends.

# Four changes we are asking for:

### 1. Explain where each programme's money comes from

Publish clear funding-source information before a charity starts applying. Distinguish Lottery-derived funding from separate funding streams administered by the same body, and explain any mixed sources.
Trustees should be able to make an informed decision without searching through corporate documents.

### 2. Allow proportionate alternatives to prominent branding

Publish an acknowledgement policy explaining what alternatives can be agreed, who decides, how long a decision takes and how a refusal can be reconsidered.
Where transparent acknowledgement can be achieved another way, funders should explain why that alternative would not be sufficient.

### 3. Set a minimum standard for feedback

Tell unsuccessful applicants the principal reason for rejection, whether reapplication is worthwhile and what would need to change.
A good proposal that could not be funded should not receive the same explanation as an ineligible application. Small charities need to know where to invest their limited time.

### 4. Fund trusted infrastructure and community influence

Resource the work that connects underserved charities with funders, supports organisational development and brings community knowledge into funding decisions.
Pay a diverse range of charities serving Muslim communities to help design and review programmes. Preserve funding routes for organisations working across places and with communities connected by faith, identity or shared experience.

# Muslim communities should help shape the system:

Charities serving Muslim communities contribute across health, education, youth work, poverty and community development. Their **value should not be reduced to responding to Islamophobia** or delivering **cohesion projects**, even as hostility towards their communities creates additional pressures (the Home Office recorded a 19% rise in police-recorded anti-Muslim hate crime in England and Wales in the year to March 2025, though changes in recording practice make this hard to read as a simple trend).

Their role in funding should **extend beyond being encouraged to apply.** They should help **shape** the **priorities and conditions** that determine **access.** When we asked charities what single change would make the biggest difference, two in three pointed to the same thing: **direct access to funders** and the chance to be **known** to them, **not simpler forms or better guidance. Relationships**, not paperwork, were the **real barrier**.

Infrastructure organisations such as AWN can support that participation. Responsibility for making funding accessible remains with funders. What matters is **fairer access,** useful **support** and real **influence** over decisions, not just more applications.

# About our evidence

AWN's August 2026 charity survey received **23** responses. Of the 22 charities answering the organisation-description question, **13 identified as Muslim-led.** Different numbers answered individual questions, and some questions allowed multiple answers.

**EXPERIENCES**

The survey provides insight into participating **charities' experiences**; it is not representative of all Muslim-led charities or all charities serving Muslim communities. The grassroots discussion provides separate qualitative evidence. AWN's recommendations also draw on our wider work supporting the sector.

**INFORMED BY**

This is AWN's organisational response, informed by **consultation,** rather than a formal joint submission or a claim to speak for every Muslim community.

**ABOUT**

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport's call for evidence, ***National Lottery Good Causes: Fund what matters to you***, closes at midday on 23 September 2026.
Read about the consultation and how to respond.