

AI for fundraising

For small charities and
community groups

In partnership with Kensington & Chelsea Social
Council (KCSC)



superhighways
harnessing **technology** for **community** benefit

What does Superhighways do?

Superhighways helps small charities and community groups gain essential digital and data skills backed by the right tech to achieve their goals.

A programme of Kingston Voluntary Action



What we will cover today

1. Intro to AI
2. AI tools
3. Using for fundraising
4. Checks & balances
5. Demo & dos x 5
6. Staying safe + policy and guidance
7. Next steps and useful resources



Where are you with your use of AI in general?



Arm bands needed



Doggy paddle



Treading water



Swimming



Gala medallist

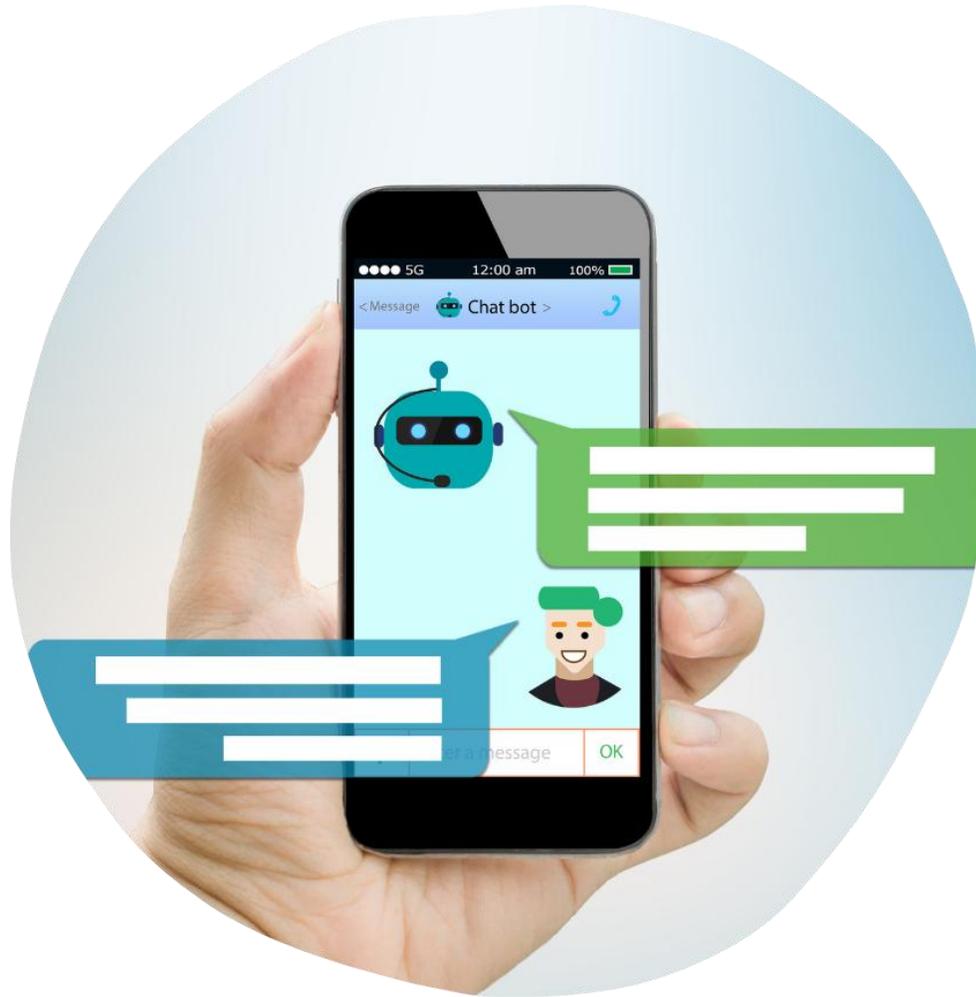


Channel swimmer



What is artificial intelligence and machine learning?





**How are we
using AI in our
everyday lives?**

Take this quick quiz
from We AI



Here are the examples of activities in the world around us.
Which do you think CURRENTLY involve Artificial Intelligence (AI) in many cases? Answer with Yes or No!

Using a smartphone*

Y Yes

N No

YES!

AI features in your smartphone include the built-in **smart assistants** such as Siri, as well as camera features such as **face detection**, and many apps use AI. You have likely been using AI for years and years!



How does AI work?



[Common Craft Explainer: Watch here](#)



Using AI for fundraising

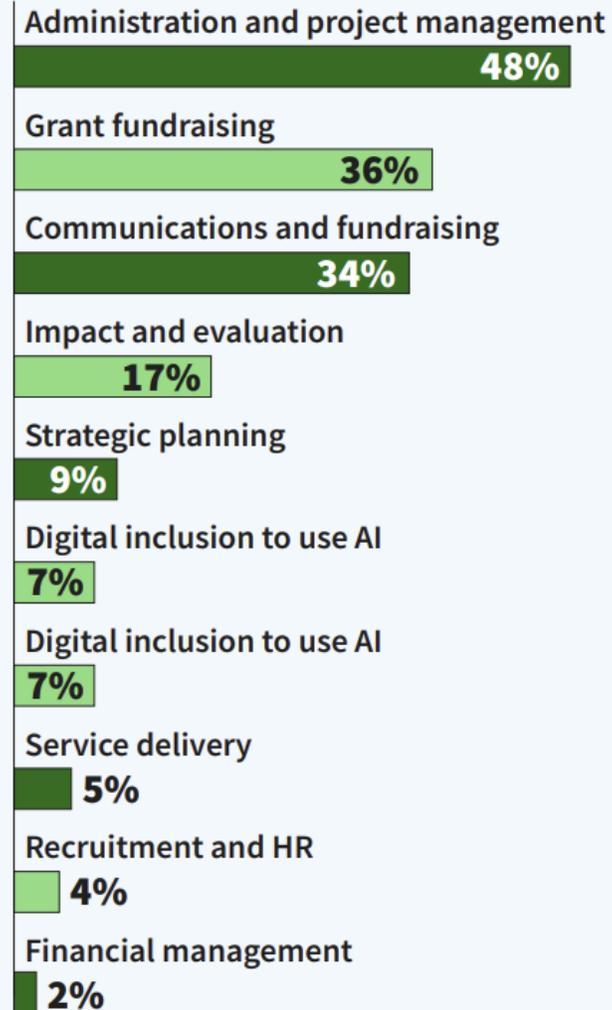


Are charities using AI for fundraising?

36%

[Charity Digital Skills Report 2025](#)

Does your organisation use AI tools or provide AI-related support in any of the following areas of work?



Discussion

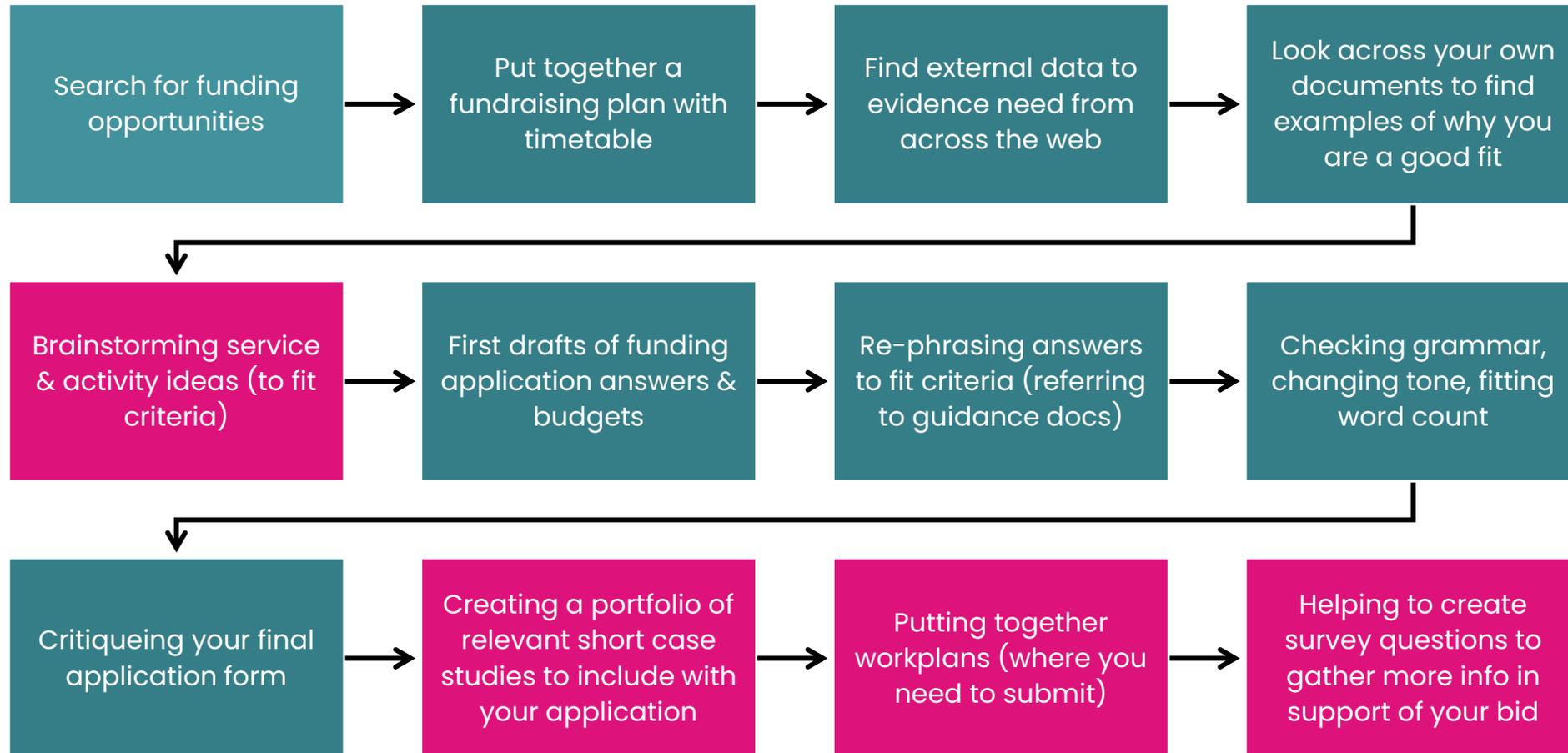
How do you think AI could help you with fundraising?

Do you have any concerns?

- ✓ Short breakouts
- ✓ In pairs
- ✓ Share key points in chat



How could you be using AI?



What do Funders say?



National Lottery Community Foundation

NLCF's position on the use of AI tools is:

- ✓ You can use AI tools to help write your funding application. They will not reject an application just because AI was used.

- ✓ In particular they state that AI may be particularly useful if:
 - ✓ English is not your first language
 - or
 - ✓ If you're new to writing funding applications

- ✓ **BUT they say USE AI WITH CAUTION**
 - ✓ They want to hear about your community and
 - ✓ AI has an environmental impact

[See their AI & funding applications guidance here](#)



What do funders see as main issues?

- ✓ Applications seem generic and inaccurate.
Grant assessors read vast numbers of grant applications and if the same phrases or comments appear repetitively – because applicants have used the same AI to populate their application – this will become very evident. Bit like a Teacher reading essays with the same phrases copied into them.
- ✓ Security of data (especially with free tools)
- ✓ Lack of regulation of AI
- ✓ In built biases that may perpetuate discrimination
- ✓ Erosion of copyright and intellectual property
- ✓ Huge environmental impact of using AI – AI generated queries can use between 10–30 more energy than standard search



Funders & AI – conclusion

- ✓ **Does AI level the playing field?** It is often said that AI can benefit grassroots community groups, those who have little experience of writing applications or those whose first language is not English
- ✓ Could be useful in editing your application or to cut it down to the word limit
- ✓ **Use AI cautiously and thoughtfully.** Funders won't necessarily penalise you for using AI, but in general there is a chance that it will make your application weaker
- ✓ Many funders now ask applicants to declare whether they have used AI. As these have said it will not affect their decision on your application, they must want to monitor how widely AI is being used. They may also want to monitor the success rate of applications written by or helped by AI
- ✓ None of the funders I looked at positively encouraged the use of AI
- ✓ None of the funders use AI for assessing applications and decision making (?)
- ✓ In general Funders want to hear about you and your community –
Do not let AI replace your unique voice



AI tools



Tools to consider

Mainstream /
getting started

ChatGPT

Copilot

Gemini

Fundraising specific
/ inbuilt platform

Plinth

Charity
Excellence
Framework

Local Giving

Next steps / more
specific tools

Perplexity

Claude

LM Notebook



Choosing your AI tool

- ✓ Has your organisation approved it for use?
- ✓ Does it give you useful responses that will help you in your work?
- ✓ Is it easy to use?
- ✓ Is it useful within a specific context?
- ✓ Does it sit within my existing workplace system e.g. Microsoft or Google?

AI tool	A good place to start if you are a...
Microsoft Copilot	Microsoft 365 user
Google Gemini	Google Workspace user. Also integrated with Android for smartphone use
Chat GPT	Anyone but consider a business account for data control & to avoid limitations

[AI tools info sheet](#)



**Let's log in to
our AI tool**



Chat GPT Dashboard overview



NAVCA artificial intelligence
training toolkit for
development workers



superhighways
harnessing technology for **community** benefit

[Link to video](#)

Copilot dashboard overview



NAVCA artificial intelligence
training toolkit for
development workers



superhighways
harnessing technology for **community** benefit

Demo and Do

Searching for funding opportunities



John's prompt

Funding opportunities for charities and community organisations in London that provide counselling, mental health support or related wellbeing services.

[See responses](#)

AI makes mistakes



Spot the mistake

Prompt:

“List all capital cities in the world with a Z in it.”

What has it included?

What would you tell it to do next?

Inaccuracy

Here is a list of capital cities around the world that contain the letter "z":

1. Baku – Azerbaijan
2. Brazzaville – Republic of the Congo
3. Bratislava – Slovakia
4. Caracas – Venezuela
5. Khartoum North (Al-Khartum Bahri) – Sudan (part of the Tri-capital with Omdurman and Khartoum)
6. Lilongwe – Malawi
7. Luanda – Angola
8. Lusaka – Zambia
9. Mexico City – Mexico
10. N'Djamena – Chad
11. Tashkent – Uzbekistan
12. Tbilisi – Georgia
13. Zagreb – Croatia
14. San Salvador – El Salvador

These are capital cities that include the letter "z."

Spot the mistake

Prompt:

“Can you create a brief infographic outlining 4 key AI tools available including Copilot”

What’s incorrect in this sample taken from the infographic?

spellings

4 Key AI Tools to Boost Productivity



Microsoft Copilot

Integrates with Microsoft 365 apps (Word, Excel, Teams) to help draft content, analyze data, and summarize meetings.

Saves time and improves accuracy by automating routine tasks



ChatGPT

Generates text, answers questions, and helps brainstorm ideas.

Great for quick content creation and problem-solving

Spot the mistake

Prompt:

“Looking at our website answer this funding application question “Why should we fund you to support VCSE organisations in England with digital?”

What’s not quite right?

**Tone &
USisms**

Why you should totally fund Superhighways to support VCSE Orgs With Digital

Okay, let’s cut to the chase. If you’re looking for a team that can genuinely help VCSE organizations across England get their digital ducks in a row, Superhighways is the real deal. We’re not just dipping a toe into digital support — we’ve basically been swimming laps in this pool for over two decades.

Superhighways has been helping small charities and community groups for **25+ years**, back when someone actually thought email was a passing fad. (Yeah... that aged well.) We’re still here, still kicking, and still the go-to folks for practical, judgment-free support that helps orgs get up to speed without splashing the dollars or burning out their teams.

Concern?

You are looking for useful external data to include as evidence in your funding bid.

What should you be mindful of with this return?

References

✦ AI Overview

Child poverty in London is a major issue, affecting over a third of children (around 700,000) after housing costs, with rates higher than the rest of England, driven by high living expenses, particularly housing, and impacting health and opportunities, though some recent trends show small decreases in certain areas, according to [Trust for London](#) and [the Greater London Authority](#). Key factors include low wages, insecure and the high cost of private renting, with some boroughs like Tower Hamlets seeing nearly half their children in poverty. [🔗](#)



Key Statistics & Trends

- **Prevalence:** Over 1 in 3 children (around 35-36%) in London live in poverty after housing costs, higher than the England average.
- **High-Risk Ages:** Poverty rates are highest for older children, with 41% of 15-19 olds in poverty.
- **Working Households:** A 32% rise in child poverty in working households since highlights wage stagnation and insecure work as major drivers.

Demo and Do

Sourcing data to evidence need



Writing better prompts

Define

1. expertise you need
2. your task
3. objective
4. relevant context
5. output/format you want



Talk to it

- ✓ For this task act as an expert in...
- ✓ You will need to be...
- ✓ Your task is to...
- ✓ Be aware of...
- ✓ Our audience is...
- ✓ Include/exclude...
- ✓ Give me the output in this format...



Break time

10 minutes



Demo and Do

Suggesting ideas for project activities



AI & fundraising platforms



Plinth

<https://www.plinth.org.uk/features/ai-grant-writer>

Write high-quality and specific grant applications with AI.

Apply to more grants and get more funding for your charity.

Enter your email

Create Free Account

The screenshot displays the 'Application Questions' section of the Plinth AI Grant Writer. It features a 'Fill out using AI' button and a progress indicator for 'Step 3: We'll use your project information to fill out the narrative questions on the application form.' The interface is divided into two sections: 'Section 1: Your Organisation' and 'Section 2: About your Organisation'. Section 1 contains 15 numbered questions, with a note that 15 questions are hidden. Section 2 contains 6 numbered questions, with a note that 6 questions are hidden. A chat window on the right side of the interface shows a character named Pippin saying 'Hi! I'm Pippin!' and a text input field with the prompt 'Ask me any question about Plinth!'. A 'Start writing' button is visible at the bottom of the form.



Plinth access

- ✓ Plinth offers an AI Grant Writer tool
- ✓ You can try it for free
- ✓ You're likely to still be able to use it, just not export as a pdf or copy and paste into another document
- ✓ Pricing £150 a month

Fundraising

Scale your fundraising with our AI.
£150 / month

For as many grants as you need to write, and as many users as you need.

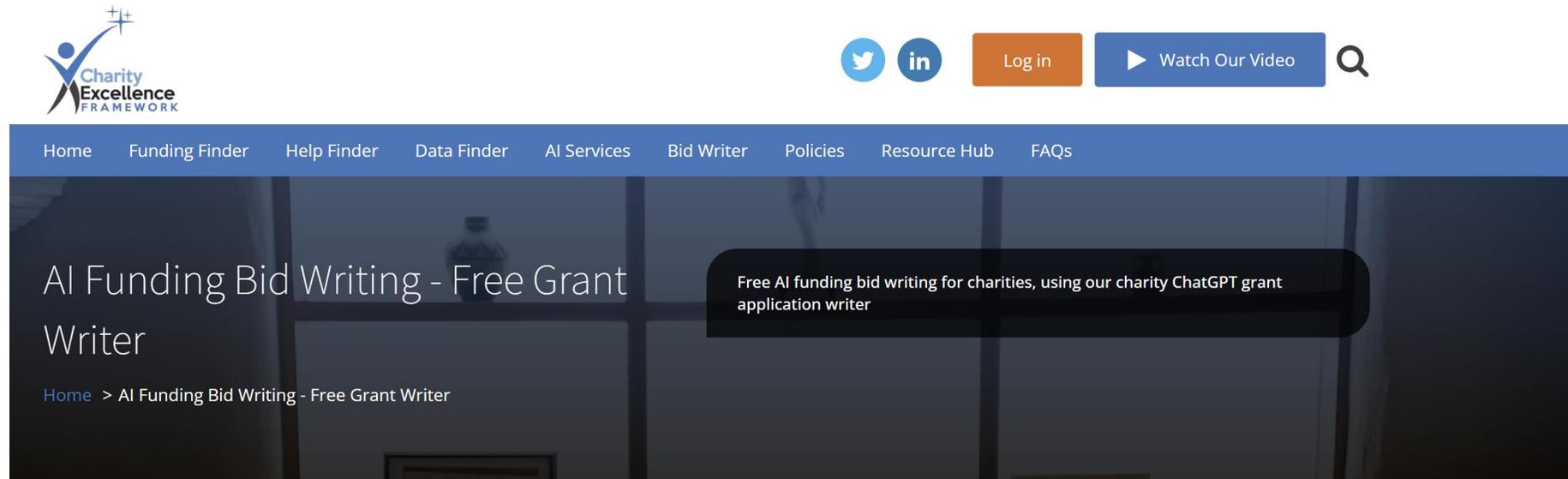
Enter your email

Try it free



Charity Excellence Framework

<https://www.charityexcellence.co.uk/free-charity-ai-bid-writing/>



Free AI Funding Bid Writing For Charities

We provide free AI funding bid writing for charities, using our ChatGPT grant application writer. Our ChatGPT charity bid writer was built mainly for small UK charities that cannot afford a bid writer but works for any charity. It's quick and simple and you don't need to have been on a grant writing course to use it. It doesn't replace the breadth of knowledge of a good charity bid writer but will save them time by collecting the information they need from staff teams/groups and creating a draft funding bid for them to use in writing a grant application.

Quick, simple and very effective. Nearly half our ratings are 10/10.

Find Funding, Free Help & Resources - Everything Is Free.

Register Now!



Help from the bunny!

Hi, I help you find grants, free help and donations, navigate the system and fix any problems.



Select 1 from each of the 3 choices below.

Charity ▾

Local ▾

Small ▾

Funding Bid

6 minutes ago

I will ask you 17 questions but, before we begin, have all the facts, figures and details ready to hand, and try to keep each answer to less than 100 words. If the bid I write isn't as good as you want, select the regenerate text button at the end and I'll rewrite it for you.

Input here

Submit

Cancel



2 minutes ago

Email me a copy

Regenerate text

Done

Type your message



**Step into the shoes of
a funder!**

Can you spot the AI?



Exercise – Spot the AI?

What do you notice looking across the five applicants?

Is there a problem with AI?

- ✓ Read through the examples
- ✓ Short breakouts
- ✓ In small groups
- ✓ Feedback



Prompts used

✓ Applicants 1 (ChatGPT), 2 (Copilot) & 3 (Perplexity)

Our organisation supports charities in London with tech, digital and data and we want to apply to the WCIT's grant funding under their 'Helping charities and other not-for-profit organisations get the best out of IT' strand. Please draft a response to this question 'What is the need, challenge or inequality that you plan to address through this project: why is it needed now?' in 300 words referring to the application guidance here <https://wcitcharity.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Application-guidelines-April-2025.pdf>

✓ Applicant 4 (Copilot)

Please refine further by using our own voice and tone, and reference relevant experience from our website <https://superhighways.org.uk>

✓ Applicant 5 (Copilot)

Our organisation, Superhighways, supports charities in London with tech, digital and data and we want to apply to the WCIT's grant funding under their 'Helping charities and other not-for-profit organisations get the best out of IT' strand. Please draft a response to this question 'What is the need, challenge or inequality that you plan to address through this project: why is it needed now?' in 300 words referring to the application guidance here <https://wcitcharity.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Application-guidelines-April-2025.pdf>, the Charity Digital Skills report 2025 <https://charitydigitalskills.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Charity-Digital-Skills-Report-2025.pdf> and our website <https://superhighways.org.uk>



Demo and Do

Standard appeal letter referring to your website



Demo and Do

Writing draft answers referring to guidance documentation & word counts



Small charity example – paid for Copilot functionality

The screenshot displays a Microsoft Word document titled "New Deal for Young People STEAM MENTORING Funding Application Form". The document is divided into sections, with the visible parts being Section D and Section E. Section D, "Experience and Track Record", includes a question about organizational involvement with communities. Section E, "Project Need", includes a question about identifying a clear demand for the project. A Copilot AI chat window is open on the right side of the document, providing assistance. The chat window shows a user prompt: "help me complete this form by using data from the Summary Report Sept 2023 to March 2024.pdf, make sure to include vital information into the correct fields". The Copilot response states: "Sure, I can help with that. Let's start by identifying the key sections of the form and matching them with the relevant information from the Summary Report Sept 2023 to March 2024.pdf." Below the response, the Copilot identifies "Section B: About your organisation" and lists several fields that need to be completed, such as "Name of your organisation", "Website", "Address", "Name of the main contact person", "Position", "Phone number", and "Email address". The Copilot also provides buttons for "Add more details to the budget" and "Summarize the project outcomes". At the bottom of the chat window, there is a prompt: "Ask me anything about this document".

supporting. For example, young people aged 12-14 in Bethnal Green who are at risk of exclusion (max 50 words)

Section D: Experience and Track Record (this section will be scored)

5. Tell us about the organisation/s delivering your project. Include: (max 100 words)

- how you involve the communities you are serving
- and/or how you represent the communities you are serving

5

New Deal for Young People STEAM MENTORING Funding Application Form

6. Please provide examples of when you have delivered mentoring with young people from your chosen cohorts (including examples from partners if applicable). Include: (max 300 words)

- your impact
- how you met the draft mentoring quality statement principles

7. Please provide examples of when you have supported employers to deliver volunteer mentoring (including examples from partners if applicable). Include: (max 300 words)

- your impact
- details of any quality marks that you or your partners have

Section E: Project Need (this section will be scored)

8. Describe the characteristics and needs of the young people that you will support through mentoring. (max 250 words) Please:

- identify a clear demand for your project including relevant evidence, research and knowledge of young people's needs locally
- explain how you have and will involve these groups in the design, delivery and evaluation of your mentoring model

Copilot

help me complete this form by using data from the [Summary Report Sept 2023 to March 2024.pdf](#), make sure to include vital information into the correct fields

Sure, I can help with that. Let's start by identifying the key sections of the form and matching them with the relevant information from the [Summary Report Sept 2023 to March 2024.pdf](#).

Section B: About your organisation

- Name of your organisation: [REDACTED]
- Website: *An external link was removed to protect your privacy.*
- Address: Tower Hamlets, London
- Name of the main contact person: [REDACTED]
- Position: Programmes Director
- Phone number: *An external link was removed to protect your privacy.*
- Email address: *An external link was removed to protect your privacy.*

Add more details to the budget

Summarize the project outcomes

Ask me anything about this document



Safe use of AI



AI tools should
have inbuilt
'guardrails'

You are also a
guardrail

“Be a good human”

[Canva AI acceptable use policy](#)

Be the **“human in the loop”** and make
sure that AI is working correctly and
safely for you



Don't	Do
× Upload personal data	✓ Remove names and other personal data from spread sheets or documents e.g. for data analysis
× Set up AI accounts for work using your personal email address	✓ Use your work email address [does your organisation have domain emails e.g. .org.uk]
× Use AI content that is incorrect or misleading	✓ Check and verify information always - ' human in the loop '
× Use any new AI tools available	✓ Use approved AI tools for example the AI tool within the system used by your organisation e.g. Gemini for Google Workspace, Copilot for Microsoft 365
× Lose track of outputs or make decisions purely based on AI outputs	✓ Save important prompts or information for your audit trail, particularly regarding insights & decision-making
× Share your AI accounts log in details with others	✓ Use your own strong passwords and follow usual cyber security best practices
× Share harmful or discriminatory content	✓ Be mindful of inherent bias



Policy and guidance for you and your team



Policy / guidelines template

Guidance / policy for using Artificial Intelligence (AI) at [name of organisation]

Our values

At [name of organisation] we use technology to support our mission to [work of your organisation] with [who you work with] to create change.

At the same time, we're thinking carefully about the ethics, risks, and responsibilities that come with using them.

List any values that are important to your organisation. Mention any that are particularly important for your approach to technology. This will help staff and volunteers remain grounded in your organisation's work, recognising that technology offers tools and techniques that enhance your work: it is not the driver of your mission.

Why are we using AI?

We are investing in learning about AI, so that we can apply this to our work with the aim of increasing our impact and sustainability.

Do you have any relevant information to add here? E.g. spending more time with people who need you most, ensuring staff have appropriate skills for their roles and any they have in the future.

We are exploring how AI might help us to:

Free up staff time and create capacity, reduce administration and improve our processes. For example, we may use AI for: [delete / add as appropriate]

- AI meeting notes
- Transcribing interviews
- Creating copy for marketing
- Generating images for posters
- Help with funding bids
- Drafting email responses
- Analysing survey responses

You may wish to state where you have decided AI is not appropriate to use e.g. decision to not use for image creation

You can use [this template](#) to create guidance or a basic policy for your organisation.

This template is adapted from [ProMo Cymru's public AI Statement](#)



Online learning for your team

1. [Charity Excellence Framework training videos](#) – full AI for Fundraising set coming soon



What's your next
step or key
learning from
today?

Take a moment to think and
then share in Chat / out loud



About Superhighways....

A programme of Kingston Voluntary Action, we provide digital, data and tech advice, support & training to the sector, including:

- ✓ Tech Support
- ✓ [Training](#) and 1-1 support
- ✓ Websites
- ✓ Digital, data & tech strategy
- ✓ Digital inclusion
- ✓ Consultancy
- ✓ Digital leadership
- ✓ [Datawise London](#)



Sign up to our newsletter for training & resources:
<https://superhighways.org.uk/e-news/>



Thanks for taking part

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