

# The Guide to Major Trusts – an introduction

*The Guide to Major Trusts 2019/20* is the 16th edition of the UK's definitive guide to large grant-making charities. The guide includes detailed background information on over 1,000 of the UK's largest grant-making charities as well as commentary and advice on how to apply and what grant-makers are looking for.

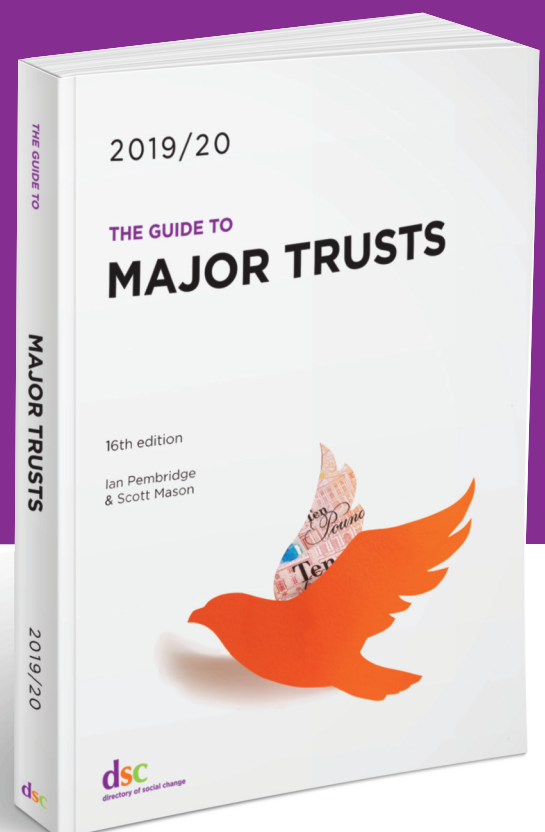
The primary purpose of the guide is to provide a comprehensive and practical funding resource that enables charity professionals, including trustees, chief executives, fundraisers and volunteers to access the billions of pounds awarded in the UK by grant-makers each year.

In the process of conducting the research for the guide, it has also been possible to collect additional data, which provides insights into current grant-making trends and practices in the UK. This research brief presents some of the key findings from this research.

The guide is available to purchase from DSC in print as well as in all digital e-book formats, more information can be found online at [www.dsc.org.uk/gmt](http://www.dsc.org.uk/gmt).

*“With over 9,000 trusts distributing charitable funding, identifying those sympathetic to our cause can be time consuming. The Guide to Major Trusts has been an invaluable resource in making the task more time and energy efficient. It's well organised, easy to use and the comprehensive structure helps narrow down searches with confidence.”*

**Hannah Rudd, Trust and Grants Fundraiser, Dorothy House Hospice Care**



# Methodology

The guide contains over 1,000 of the UK's largest grant-makers taken from DSC's database, which has details of over 4,500 charitable funders.

Grant-makers were selected based on their grant-making capacity. To be included in the guide, grant-makers needed to have the capacity to award at least £200,000 in grants in the UK per year. In order to make the guide as useful as possible to fundraisers, certain categories were excluded from the research. These were:

- Grant-makers that predominantly give overseas
- Grant-makers that give to a small number of beneficiaries each year
- Grant-makers that give to the same beneficiaries each year
- Grant-makers that give to individuals only

Over the course of our research, we looked at Charity Commission records, annual reports and accounts, websites and (occasionally) contacted the grant-makers directly. In this edition, the majority of the accounts we used were from 2016/17 (67%) and 2016/15 (23%). Where up-to-date accounts had not been submitted, the latest available accounts were used.

## Key findings

The 1,004 grant-makers included in this guide gave a combined total of **£5.5 billion** in grants.

Although the vast majority of these funders are registered grant-making charities, some of the largest funders, such as the Big Lottery Fund, the Heritage Lottery, and the arts councils (including Creative Scotland), are non-departmental public bodies. Excluding the funding given by these bodies, funding from grant-making charities amounted to **£3.65 billion**. If we look at the 697 grant-makers which appear in both this edition and the previous edition, there has been an overall increase in their giving of **£178.4 million** or **6.2%**.

## Application processes

DSC has long argued that grant-makers can play a key role in minimising the administrative burden of the grant-making process. They can do this by providing clear guidance on the types of projects that they would be willing to fund and making their application processes as simple as possible.

There are practical ways that grant-makers can do this:



**Pre-application contact:** Inviting prospective applicants to contact them by phone or email prior to completing an application.



**Two-stage application process:** Utilising a two-stage application process to minimise the time wasted by both grant-makers and applicants, which is caused by the processing and completion of ineligible applications.

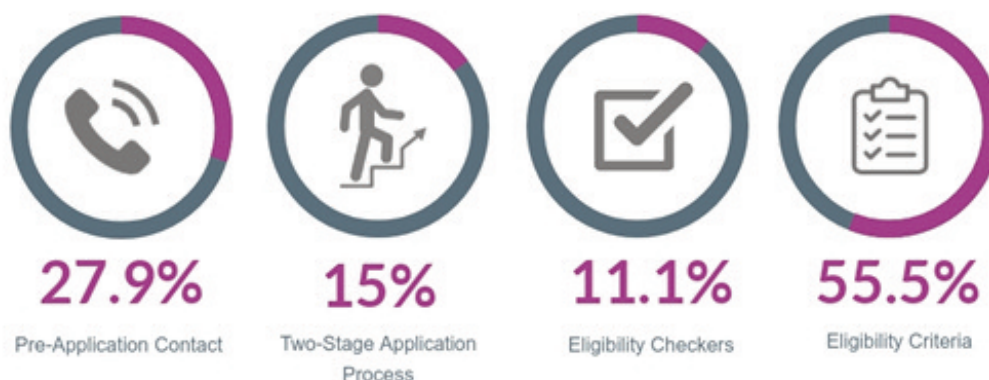


**Eligibility checkers:** Providing online interactive questionnaires to allow applicants to check their eligibility.



**Eligibility criteria:** Providing a brief description of their geographical area of benefit and focus, as well as details about the types of organisations or activities that they will or will not fund.

Analysis of the data collected during our research reveals that of the funders accepting unsolicited applications, **27.9%** welcomed contact from applicants prior to the submission of applications; **15%** of funders utilised a two-stage application process; **11.1%** offered applicants the option to check their eligibility using an online eligibility checker; and **55.5%** provided a clear list of eligibility criteria.



## Social media

Digital technologies today allow grant-makers to advertise their grant programmes and promote the impact of their funding to more people than ever before. While many grant-makers choose to do this using conventional websites, data collected for this edition of *The Guide to Major Trusts* reveals that a growing number of funders are utilising social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter to connect with their supporters and beneficiaries.

Of the funders listed in this edition of *The Guide to Major Trusts*, almost 15% have Twitter profiles, nearly 11% have Facebook pages, and 3.6% have Instagram accounts.



## Conclusions

DSC has long encouraged funders to do everything they can to make their grant-making processes as efficient and simple as possible. Although we wish to see more of the grant-makers in this edition adopt the types of initiatives and practices recommended by DSC, we recognise that not all funders have the resources to do so. We also acknowledge the fact that many actively choose not to place any restrictions at all on the types of projects that they will fund.

It is encouraging to see many grant-makers begin to embrace the opportunities that digital technologies provide. This is the first time in the series that we have collected information about grant-makers' use of social media. As such, it will be interesting to see how this trend develops in future editions of *The Guide to Major Trusts*.

# About the authors

## Ian Pembridge



Ian is a Senior Researcher at DSC where he has worked on all of DSC's core funding directories including The Guide to Major Trusts 2017/18, The Guide to UK Company Giving 2017/18 and as lead author on The Directory of Grant Making Trusts 2018/19.

He has a BA (Hons) in Politics and International Business from the

University of Liverpool and has over five years' experience working in the financial services industry. His current areas of interest are corporate charities, European funding and international foundations.

## Scott Mason



Scott joined DSC in January 2018. He has a BA (Hons) and an MA (Hons) in Politics and International Relations from Lancaster University.

Prior to working for DSC, Scott worked as a researcher with a number of voluntary organisations such as The Centre for Internet & Society, where he conducted research into privacy and big data.

His current interests include social

value and corporate social responsibility.

## About DSC

The Directory of Social Change (DSC) has a vision of an independent voluntary sector at the heart of social change.

We help independent charities, voluntary organisations and community groups to achieve their goals by:

- Providing practical tools that organisations and activists need, including publications, training courses, conferences and research
- Acting as a 'concerned citizen' in public policy debates, leading campaigns and stimulating debate on key policy issues
- Carrying out research and providing information to influence policymakers



To find out more about our research, visit our website:

[www.dsc.org.uk/research](http://www.dsc.org.uk/research)

Or contact us directly:

[research@dsc.org.uk](mailto:research@dsc.org.uk)

Postal enquiries can be directed to:

**Directory of Social Change,  
Suite 103, 1 Old Hall Street,  
Liverpool L3 9HG**