

Application to become a Woodland Social Enterprise Centre of Excellence

Closing: 9am Monday 21st June 2021

Responses to applicants: 5pm Wednesday 30th June 2021

Start date: 1st August 2021 (anticipated)

Programme end: 28th February 2023 (anticipated)

Become a woodland social enterprise sector leader! Apply now and receive a £10,000 grant, free business support and training to become a hub of knowledge, inspiration and training for your region.

The Plunkett Foundation are looking to support three successful, trading woodland social enterprises to become Centres of Excellence for their regions, as part of a prospective programme entitled Woodland Social Enterprise Network.

The three woodland social enterprises that are chosen will be provided with a £10,000 grant, free business support and training, and be paid to mentor other new and trading woodland social enterprise groups.

By becoming Centres of Excellence the organisations will be promoted as exemplars of best practice for their region. They will be supported to increase capacity, strengthen their business model, develop their facilities and sustainably manage their woodland heritage for future generations. The COEs will supported to host public events, provide training to others, inspire the public to set-up woodland social enterprises and help established woodland social enterprises to thrive.

If you are running a successful woodland social enterprise and would like the opportunity to support others to do the same please apply now.

This opportunity is reliant on a successful application to the Heritage Fund Green Recovery Challenge Fund by The Plunkett Foundation.

As a Centre of Excellence you will:

- Receive a £10,000 grant which can be spent on training, facilities, staffing or business support to enable your woodland social enterprise to transition in to a Centre of Excellence for your region.
- Receive business support and access free webinars, events and resources to help you maximise your grant and plan the development of your Centre of Excellence.
- Benefit from regional, national and sector publicity to boost interest in your woodland social enterprise.
- Be paid £1,500 (inc VAT) to host a regional networking event for those interested in setting up a woodland social enterprise.
- Be paid £240 (inc. VAT) to co-host an online study visit with a Plunkett team member.
- Be paid £340 (inc. VAT) to co-host an on-site study visit event for 4 new woodland social enterprise groups.

- Be paid £120 (inc VAT) for the development of a case study about your woodland social enterprise.
- Have the opportunity to be paid £240 (inc VAT) per day to deliver mentoring support to new groups or other trading woodland social enterprises.
- Visit the other 2 woodland social enterprises chosen to become Centres of Excellence. Expenses up to £150 (inc VAT) will be covered.

As a Centre of Excellence you will be expected to:

- Independently deliver mentoring/support, run small scale events on site and host the public and other trading woodland social enterprises.
- Attend online/ in-person Centre of Excellence meetings (expenses will be paid to cover travel and refreshments but not time to attend).
- Engage in publicity and marketing activities.
- Complete monitoring reports, in which some of the questions asked here will be repeated; this is so we can ascertain if you have reached your goals /assess the impact Centres of Excellence have on their local communities and the impact of the Woodland Social Enterprise programme as a whole. Please therefore retain a copy of your application for future use.
- Engage with the programme swiftly, the anticipated start date is 1st August 2021.
- Remain involved in the Woodland Social Enterprise Network programme until 28th February 2023 (anticipated).

Please note:

- **This activity is reliant on a successful application to the Heritage Fund Green Recovery Challenge Fund. A second round application has been submitted by Plunkett on the 14th May 2021, feedback is expected within nine weeks of submission – 16th July 2021.**
- This is part of a larger scale programme, Woodland Social Enterprise Programme, which aims to protect the natural heritage and cultural heritage of woodlands in England. This will be achieved through the setting up of new woodland social enterprises and supporting of trading woodland social enterprises. The Plunkett Foundation, alongside the eight partners (Community Woodland Association, Grown in Britain, Forest Research, Forestry Commission, Locality, Llais y Goedwig, Shared Assets and Small Woods) will be offering free events, training, small scale bursaries and business support to groups. As a Centre of Excellence you will be expected to, and be paid to, deliver some of these activities.
- Only one woodland social enterprise will be chose per region to become a Centre of Excellence.
- Funding will only be paid into community/organisation bank/building society accounts, not personal accounts; please ensure you have an appropriate account set up for this.

The application process:

- The application can be saved and re-started at any point. [Please use the save button at the top right of the form, under the title.](#)
- The submission deadline for applications is 9am Monday 21st June 2021.

- All applicants will receive a response by 5pm Wednesday 30th June 2021. Detailed feedback will not be provided to unsuccessful applicants.
- In addition to the application form, you are required to submit:
 - Business plan
 - Financial report/accounts
 - Impact report or a document that outlines the impact your organisation has made of the past 1-5 years
 - Governing documents (model rules, articles, constitution)
 - Employers liability insurance
 - Public liability insurance
- Initial assessments to create a shortlist will be made using the application form and governing documents only. All other documents will be used to choose the final three woodland social enterprises.

If you have any queries, concerns or comments please contact info@plunkett.co.uk or call 01993 810730.

The Woodland Social Enterprise Network Programme – A Summary

The COEs will be part of the Woodland Social Enterprise Network programme, an England wide initiative to support and develop WSEs.

- Start date: 1st August 2021 (anticipated)
- Programme end: 28th February 2023 (anticipated)
- England only.
- Developed by WSEs for WSEs.

The Woodland Social Enterprise Network (WSEN) aims to support communities across England to tackle the issues they face in an environmental and economically sustainable manner; through the creation and development of woodland social enterprises (WSE).

WSEs are sustainable businesses that focus on social and environmental change, whilst boosting local economies. WSE engage people in their natural heritage, protect, restore and create spaces and mitigate climate change; they protect woodland cultural heritage whilst providing solutions to societal problems such as: lack of education and employment, poor mental and physical health.

Through the programme:

- 3 established WSEs will become Centres of Excellence (knowledge hubs) for their regions during and beyond the programme.
- 100 new or trading groups will access the Advice Line, going on to access specialist support, bursaries and events.
- 10 new WSEs, 470 volunteer, 18 full-time and 26 part-time staff positions will be created.
- 4500+ people will have a greater connection to nature through visiting, setting up, developing, volunteering and working in WSEs.
- A stronger, financially stable, self-supporting sector that will continue beyond the programme.

The programme will offer:

- An advice line
- Business support (mentor and specialist Adviser level)
- Bursaries (up to £1,500 for new groups)
- Webinars
- Study visits
- Networking events
- Case study resources

Eligibility Check

To ensure applicants are suitable for this programme, please tick to confirm that: (all fields required)

- You are a woodland social enterprise.
- You have been trading for at least 3 years.
- You are based in England.
- You are committed to becoming a regional Centre of Excellence – a leader in the woodland social enterprise sector – a knowledge, inspiration and training centre that promotes and supports the setting up and development of woodland social enterprises.
- You are able to engage with the programme immediately (anticipated start date is 1st August 2021) – attend meetings (in person and online), undertake training, participate in promotional activity etc.
- You own the woodland you work in or have a lease that has at least 20 years left (from date of programme completion 31st March 2023) with the option to re-new, and will be able to provide evidence of ownership if your application is successful.
- You have a community/organisation bank/building society account, funding will not be paid into personal accounts.
- You will remain engaged in the programme until 31st March 2023.
- You have read the application guidance notes.

If you do not meet this criteria unfortunately you are ineligible to apply to become a Centre of Excellence. But, if the Woodland Social Enterprise Network proposal is successful you may be eligible for funded support, events and training and could apply for a small scale bursary. In the meantime, please stay in touch via the [Woodland Social Enterprise Network](#) Facebook Group a peer to peer support group set up by the sector, and hosted by Plunkett.

If you are a community woodland (locally rooted, trading for the benefit of the community, accountable to the community and have broad community impact) then you may already be eligible for free business support. Please do not hesitate to contact us – info@plunkett.co.uk, 01993 810730 or via our [online enquiry form](#).