



RAISE Programme Guidance on making a claim for grant funding 2026



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Introduction

This document provides guidance for organisations funded under the RAISE Programme on submitting claims for grant payments in line with the Letter of Offer for each Locality Led Project. It contains practical guidance on the submission of claims for grant payment - funded organisations must operate in full compliance with their Letter of Offer.

Expenditure Claims

Claims are expected to be made quarterly by each organisation. The RAISE Team will send a bespoke claim form to the lead organisation each quarter for completion. This will be an Excel version of Annex I of the Letter of Offer. This digital version is intended to streamline processes and reduce administrative burden for all parties involved.

The agreed costs in your letter of offer will be reimbursed once the relevant evidence has been provided with your claim. A range of example templates have been included in the annexes of this guidance which you may find useful in gathering and presenting evidence in support of your claim. However, you do not have to use these if you have equivalent versions already in place.

Vouching and Verification Visits

In line with our obligations to ensure that public funds are appropriately safeguarded, organisations funded through the RAISE programme are subject to an assessment of their governance and financial controls. This can be in the form of both a pre-approval verification visit and a full verification visit.

A pre-approval visit will take place if an organisation has NOT received government funding in the last financial year. Each organisation will have a full verification visit within the first financial year of receiving its funding.

Visits will be carried out by two members of the RAISE Team. The length of the visit will vary depending on the organisation, but a minimum of two hours should be allowed for each visit.

During the visit the RAISE Team will complete a verification checklist and will seek evidence and assurance of compliance with the Locality Led Project Letter of Offer.

Following the visit organisations will receive a letter advising what best practice recommendations (if any) they should put in place. If any major areas of concern are identified this may affect potential funding. Organisations will be asked to rectify these issues and provide evidence that they have done so. A follow up visit may be carried out to confirm that this has been done.



1. Procurement

Organisations must maintain a procurement policy which sets out the relevant procedures, including the level of approval required for different levels of spending.

The Letter of Offer explains that funded organisations must comply with DAO (DoF) 05/22 “Grant or Procurement”. This says that –

- a) grant recipients involved in funded activities are required to have appropriate and proportionate processes in place to ensure that value for money has been obtained in the purchase of goods, services or works funded by the Grant. This may be evidenced through competitive selection processes or other transparent and robust methods appropriate to the scale and nature of the expenditure; and
- b) records of key decisions pertaining to such purchases must be retained by the grant recipient for audit purposes

All Organisations must apply appropriate public procurement legislation and policy requirements. It is important that organisations retain evidence of quotes sought, i.e. hard copy, e-mails, screenshots etc. and approvals to process, to show that value for money has been achieved. All spend must also be in line with activities agreed within the Letter of Offer. An example of a procurement template is provided at Annex A.

2. Invoices

Organisations can provide scanned copies of their invoices when making a claim but are required to keep and provide the original invoices and receipts when visited by the RAISE team during vouching and verification visits. These documents will be checked against the information provided by the organisation for each claim period, bank statements etc.

Invoices must be dated, outlined on headed paper, include supplier name, address and contact details, be addressed to the relevant organisation and contain sufficient information about purchases to validate expenditure. They must show full details of the item purchased – including description, dates, and amounts.

Invoices must be endorsed with cheque/BACS number, date paid and signed and dated by two payment authorisers as seen when they are approving the payment. Invoices must be paid before they are included in a claim.

If organisations have been issued with an invoice electronically the associated email must be kept and included with the claim.



3. Budget Monitoring

All organisations are required to have a formal budget monitoring process in place. Budget reports should be signed off by the Management Committee/Board.

Annex D of your Letter of Offer outlines the agreed spend and the anticipated monthly/quarterly expenditure for your project.

If a reallocation across agreed categories of expenditure in Annex D of the Letter of Offer is required, the department must be made aware before expenditure occurs. Departmental approval of reallocation requests is discretionary.

Letter of Offer Text - Organisations should note that the Department will only consider re-profiling in exceptional circumstances and transferring of funds will be restricted between similar categories of expenditure. Generally, only one re-profiling request per financial year will be considered.

All requests must be submitted with a full and detailed rationale; a Reallocation Template can be requested from the RAISE Team for this purpose.

4. Banking

Organisations must be able to easily identify spend of RAISE funding. We recommend setting up a separate bank account or using a cost centre approach. Bank reconciliations should be prepared monthly by finance staff and hard copies signed off by a more senior member of staff. Any redundant bank accounts must be closed down in a timely manner.

i. Bank Mandate

This must be kept up to date with the details of those with payment authority. Anyone not named on the mandate must not approve payments by cheque or online. Internet bank usage needs to be covered in the bank mandate.

ii. Cheques

Cheque books must be locked away with limited access and must not be pre-signed. Cancelled cheques must be marked “cancelled” and it is recommended they are retained by stapling to the back of the cheque book or folded into the stub.



iii. Internet Banking

Adequate security controls must be in place in regard to accessing the banking system. There must also be a separation of key duties with regards to who inputs supplier's details and payments and who approves. Payments must be approved by two authorisers separately and passwords must be unique to each user. Payment approvers must be responsible for approving new suppliers or amendments to existing supplier's bank account details.

It is advisable that a "security alert" be put in place, if possible, so that a senior responsible person, e.g., Treasurer, is notified of all supplier account changes. Given the increase in electronic banking fraud and hacking scams organisations must validate all requests for account changes.

iv. Credit/Debit Cards

Cards must be held securely with limited access and assigned to one person with a secure PIN number that is not shared with anyone. There must be segregation between who authorises, uses and reconciles credit and debit card expenditure. Organisations must have approval by a senior manager, in line with your credit card policy, prior to using the card. An example of a credit card authorisation template is attached at Annex B. Credit Cards must not be used to withdraw cash, and all balances should be paid in full each month by direct debit.

v. Petty Cash

Petty cash must be locked away with restricted access. All receipts must be kept and a receipt book maintained and signed by staff seeking reimbursement as well as the staff member responsible for the petty cash.

A regular (for example weekly / monthly) reconciliation must be completed and signed off by a senior member of staff. The system should be regularly reviewed by the Management Committee/Board.

vi. Income – Cash Transactions

Organisations who operate cash transactions, e.g. collect membership, tuition fees, entrance fees, donations, etc. must keep a record of all monies received. There should be a segregation of duties when cash handling, i.e. two people count the cash, one person completes the lodgement slip and the other lodges in the bank. Cash must be held securely while on the premises and be lodged at the earliest opportunity.

If funded activities generate income this must be notified to the RAISE Team in advance.



5. Financial Record Retention

All original financial documentation must be kept for seven years from the date of the last payment made by RAISE. This information must be made available to the RAISE Team during all vouching and verification visits.

6. Publicity

You should have received a RAISE logo pack for branding purposes. The requirements for using the RAISE branding outlined with your Letter of Offer must be strictly adhered to.

7. Government Funding Database

All organisations in receipt of funding are required to upload a series of Governance documentation (Copy of Constitution/Memorandum of association, List of Office Bearers or Board of Governors, Organisation Chart, Copy of Audited Accounts or Financial Statement, Rental Agreement/Lease or evidence of ownership) to the Government Funding Database. These documents are collectively known as Funders Passport Declaration.

Please note that apart from verification visits, there are other factors taken into account. These include consideration of previous claims and project reporting history and allows a rating to be awarded which determines the level of scrutiny claims for payment are subject to.

There are three different ratings used –

- Robust** – A high level of assurance that the funding arrangement is well-controlled, properly governed, and supported by the findings of the Risk Assessment Team
- Adequate** – A moderate level of assurance — systems and controls are generally in place but with some weaknesses or gaps or
- No Rating** – No formal assurance opinion has been given. There may be many reasons for this, i.e. the programme is new or still developing and the funding has not yet been reviewed or assessed.

The rating will impact how much detail is required at vouching and verification. Please see table at Annex C for more details.



8. Useful Information for claiming expenditure

Organisations must submit a completed Claim Form on a quarterly basis. This claim form will be emailed each quarter for completion. This spreadsheet will also contain the Profile of Expenditure set out in Annex D of the Letter of Offer. This is for information purposes only and no action from the organisation is required.

An overall summary tab is also included in this spreadsheet and will be updated quarterly by the RAISE governance team. This is shared with you for information purposes only. This has been prepopulated with Letter of Offer data to reduce the administrative burden on organisations.

Alongside submitting the Claim Form, organisations must provide a quarterly Delivery Progress report on the RAISE online Platform. Your Locality Co-Ordinator can give you advice on this if helpful. A link will be sent to you to enable access to the Platform. **Claims will not be paid until the progress report is completed.**

Claim Forms should be submitted within one month of the end of the quarter.

All expenditure should align with the costed workplan in Annex B of the Letter of Offer.

Claims Forms must be accompanied by:

- all relevant invoices applicable to that claim,
- the relevant evidence for all salary expenditure,
- the relevant control sheet (or equivalent) for expenditure that requires it such as mileage claims, cash receipts etc.

Example templates can be found in Annexes D, E and F of this document and can be used if helpful.

Once all of the relevant information has been collated and compiled, the claim should be forwarded to RAISE.Claims@education-ni.gov.uk. The RAISE Team will aim to ensure that payments are made within 10 working days of receiving a complete claim with all supporting information.

Claimed expenditure that is not included on the agreed Letter of Offer, will be disallowed. If expenditure has been rejected, the reasoning for this will be outlined by the RAISE Team. Further evidence can be provided regarding this expenditure, and this should be included in the next expenditure application.

Please refer to the checklist at Annex G before submitted claims.



9. Payroll / Salary

A payroll system must be in place to establish effective financial control in line with the Letter of Offer. Management of salaries via a spreadsheet is not acceptable. The payroll system must be password protected. Staff members must not approve payments to themselves. If costs for staff time are split across different programmes, then the costs for each funder must be easily identifiable. It is recommended staff keep time sheets.

Organisations must register with HMRC Real Time and be able to provide P11s, P32s and your annual statement from HMRC to show that payments are up to date. If employees are contributing to a pension scheme, evidence must be provided to show that contributions are being paid over to the pension provider on a regular basis.

Self-employed information must be supplemented with evidence from the relevant accountant responsible for managing and assuring this information with HMRC.

10. Contacts

Further information and support can be sourced by contacting us as below:

- RAISE Expenditure query - RAISE.Claims@education-ni.gov.uk
- RAISE General query - RAISE@education-ni.gov.uk
- Contact details for the locality co-ordinator for your area can be found here; [RAISE Localities](#)



ANNEX A – Procurement Template

	SUPPLIER NAME	COST
QUOTE 1:		£
QUOTE 2:		£
QUOTE 3:		£

Items/Services purchased:

.....
.....
.....
.....

APPROVED SUPPLIER:

Name:

.....

Address:

.....
.....

Rationale for purchase:

.....
.....
.....
.....

Approved by:

Signed: Date:

Position:

Signed: Date:

Position:



ANNEX B – Credit Card Template

Request for Credit Card Use

(invoices/receipts/booking forms to be attached)

Name of Requester:	
Date:	
Reason for spending:	
Programme/Bank Account:	
Cost:	
Transaction completed by:	
Position in organisation:	
Date:	
Authorised by:	
Position in organisation:	
Date:	



ANNEX C – Grant Rating

The table below shows how an organisation's rating can impact on the level of scrutiny their claims are subject to.

Size of grant/ rating	ROBUST	ADEQUATE
£0 – £30,000	<p>25% check completed on all invoices and receipts.</p> <p>Submit electronic claim form. RAISE staff will advise what supporting documentation is required.</p>	<p>50% check completed on all invoices and receipts.</p> <p>Submit electronic claim form. RAISE staff will advise what supporting documentation is required.</p>
£30,000+	<p>25% check completed on all invoices and receipts.</p> <p>Submit electronic claim form. RAISE staff will advise what supporting documentation is required.</p>	<p>100% check completed on all invoices and receipts.</p> <p>Supporting document must be submitted with all claims for funding.</p>
	This rating lasts for a period of 3 years	This rating lasts for a period of one year



ANNEX G – Final Check List for RAISE claims

General

- Update RAISE Platform Project Delivery Section before claiming
- Ensure claims are outlined in chronological order on the Expenditure Breakdown

Invoices

- All invoices are on headed paper with contact numbers and/or e-mail address.
- All invoices are addressed to the organisation.
- Facilitators have included dates of when events have taken place (if appropriate)
- Electronic invoices are supported by original e-mail.
- Cheque number or bank's BACS reference number are noted on all invoices
- All invoices are dated within the funding period or for services during that period.

Receipts

- All cash receipts provided by an employee or volunteer who is to be reimbursed by the organisation, are attached to a completed 'Expenses control form'
- All credit card receipts have been signed by two signatories.
- Ensure the 'Mileage control form template has been completed (if appropriate)

Salaries

- Have all relevant payslips and P11's been provided?
- Breakdown schedule from your pension provider included (if appropriate)
- Does the figure on the P11 match the figure on the Expenditure Claim Form

Signed _____

Date _____

YOUR CLAIM MAY BE RETURNED TO YOU FOR RESUBMITTING IF THE ABOVE HAS NOT BEEN FOLLOWED.



