



Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

The collaborative efforts with Idox's GrantFinder have become integral to the Council's funding strategy

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Michelle Clare

Regeneration Project Officer
Placemaking, Regeneration & Enterprise
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

Background:

A diverse range of services

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council operates as one of the Black Country local authorities in the West Midlands, functioning specifically as a Metropolitan Borough Council. Offering a diverse range of services, including public health, adult and children's social services, education, and various other municipal functions, the Council plays a crucial role in addressing the needs of its community. Within the organisational structure, the **GrantFinder** initiative is spearheaded by a corporate lead, Michelle Clare.

For this case study, three teams at the Council have been highlighted.

The Public Health Team focuses on the **Mitigating Poverty** agenda, supporting the community in accessing services to alleviate the cost of living. This team manages numerous programs and projects in collaboration with other council directorates and voluntary sector organisations.

The **Parks Development Team** concentrates on parks and green spaces, collaborating with community organisations to bring about investments, improvements, and overall benefits for both people and wildlife utilising these spaces.

Dudley Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) supports all sizes and types of voluntary and community groups, charities and social enterprises that benefit the people of the Council. They work with people who access health and care services and those who would like more support to help them link with services and possibly get more active in their communities.



Challenges:

Navigating the complex landscape of funding opportunities

The Council's drivers for implementing funding software were multifaceted, stemming from the need to maximise funding both internally and externally, coordinate cross-directorate bidding, and avoid duplication of efforts. There was also a strategic goal to align the Council with other local authorities within the West Midlands.

The Public Health Team had difficulty finding appropriate funding for community groups and voluntary organisations. The quest for sustainable ways to continue their projects for the residents of the Council required a systematic and efficient solution.

The Parks Team, due to budget constraints, found investing in specific software or databases was not initially feasible. The advantage of council-wide buy-in was identified as a means to deliver benefits to all departments efficiently.

Solution:

The Council opted to implement Idox's Grantfinder

GrantFinder offered a centralised platform with information on over 7,500 funding schemes, including grants, loans, and awards from various sources, including local, regional, and national UK government, European funding, charitable trusts, and corporate sponsors. This one-stop-shop approach was designed to save staff time and deliver an excellent return on investment.

With automatic email alerts on saved searches, GrantFinder instantly alerts users to new or updated funds relevant to their profile. The interactive update bulletin sent weekly keeps users up-to-date on areas of interest. Information is presented in plain English at two levels of detail, offering a thumbnail overview and a detailed report on each funding program. This approach aimed to provide users with everything they needed to prepare successful bids.

“If we didn't use Grantfinder, we would have to do our own research... Grantfinder at least halves the time we would spend researching funders.”

Becky Pickin

Senior Development Officer
Dudley CVS

GrantFinder introduced workgroups functionality, enabling the creation and management of designated groups within the funding community. This ensured that information circulated to those who needed it, fostering collaboration and coordination. It boasted a large research team with extensive funding experience, dedicated to searching for new funding opportunities continuously. Personal support from the research help desk and customer service teams was also highlighted as a valuable aspect of the solution.

GrantFinder offered simple reporting capabilities, enabling organisations to analyse how they use the service and measure the impact of their funding strategies. It also provided access to CVS, enhancing the reach and impact of funding efforts.

The software was expected to be a valuable tool for the Public Health Team by finding appropriate funding for community groups and voluntary organisations, supporting them to identify sustainable ways to continue their projects for the Council residents.

The Parks Team had previously used Idox's Funding Central and engaged in manual searches. GrantFinder was chosen as a solution that offered bespoke features, allowing automated searches for relevant funding needs and sending results to users' email accounts. This was identified as a significant time-saving asset for the team.

Outcome:

The collaborative efforts with Idox's GrantFinder have become integral to the Council's funding strategy

GrantFinder yielded notable outcomes for the Council across several departments, demonstrating the positive impact on the organisation's funding landscape including:

- Supporting 31 not-for-profit organisations, helping them improve planning and identify potential funders.
- Unlocking £2,675,937 of funding this financial year for 28 not-for-profit groups.
- Contributing to 9 groups receiving £1,088,515 in funding and 19 groups accessing £1,587,422.



Financial success: In the Council's first year of using GrantFinder, £72,000 was identified for community groups. The inclusion of Dudley CVS to the license resulted in an impressive £3 million accessed for SMEs and community groups in 2022/2023.

Improved support for community groups: GrantFinder facilitated successful funding applications, enabling better support and advice for community groups. The software allowed for better planning, ensuring funds were directed to projects that matched their goals.

Enhanced planning and reactivity: The Parks Team, through GrantFinder, experienced improved planning and increased reactivity to funding opportunities. Finding new funders attracted more investment, allowing for additional improvements to play areas.

Becky Pickin, Senior Development Officer at Dudley Council Voluntary Service comments, "If we didn't use Grantfinder, we would have to do our own research... Grantfinder at least halves the time we would spend researching funders."

Michelle Clare, Regeneration Project Officer, Placemaking, Regeneration & Enterprise concludes, "GrantFinder has proven to be an essential tool for Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, addressing challenges, streamlining funding efforts, and delivering tangible outcomes. The software's user-friendly interface, real-time updates, and collaborative features have contributed to financial success, time and cost savings, and improved support for community groups. The case study highlights not only the quantitative achievements but also the positive impact on the Council's ability to plan, react to opportunities, and support the diverse needs of its community. The collaborative efforts with Idox's GrantFinder have become integral to the Council's funding strategy, demonstrating the software's significance in enhancing the Council's effectiveness in securing external funding opportunities. They are also a great team to work with and our account manager, Matt Godfrey, could not have done more to help us embed GrantFinder in our culture."

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