

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

INFORMATION ABOUT OUR LONGER PROGRAMMES

1. What is the difference between the Pilotlight Programme and the Leading Change programme?

The main difference between these programmes is that the Pilotlight Programme is available to charities in England and Wales and lasts 10 months, while The Leading Change programme is available to charities based in Scotland and lasts 6 months. Besides the length of time (and name of the programme), the programmes are run the same way and provides holistic support to charitable organisations.

2. Is there a structure to the programmes?

Throughout the programmes your organisation will work through 4 main questions:

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to go? (This will include setting aims for the project)
- How do we get there?
- How can we know when we have got there?

Every organisation we work with is different, so every project is different, and our Project Managers are very skilled at getting the best out of each team to help organisations achieve their aims.

3. What will be the involvement of our board in the programmes?

Your board needs to be bought into, and willing to engage with, the programme. Usually, we would expect the Chair to attend project meetings with the charity leader where possible.

Trustee engagement remains a key element of both programmes and how best to engage with the board will be discussed in initial meetings. It may be useful, over the course of your project, depending on the aims set out, for other trustees to be involved at different times. Regardless, we would expect Pilotlight to be an agenda at board meetings and for progress and updates to be shared with your board over the course of the project. We expect charity leaders to be updating their board as the process unfolds.

4. Can other members of our senior team participate in the programmes?

We ask that the charity leader to attend all meetings and be fully engaged throughout the programme. Other members of your senior team may be asked to participate in some of the meetings depending on the focus of the project.

5. Will the programmes be run virtually, or will meetings be face-to-face?

In the past, project meetings have been held at our offices in London or Edinburgh (apart from an early meeting which is a site visit to the organisation's office). Currently, due to Covid-19, all project meetings are being conducted virtually over Zoom. If, and when this changes, we will tell our Charity Partners in good time.

APPLYING TO THE PROGRAMMES

1) Who can apply?

We work with charities and social enterprises registered in the UK, who are tackling social disadvantage. We do not work with organisations that discriminate on the basis of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability, or any other similar categories or organisations who proselytise to service users.

2) Does our organisation need to be a registered charity to apply?

No, it doesn't need to be a registered charity – we accept applications from a wide range of charitable organisations and social enterprises. However, it is key that your organisation works primarily to tackle social disadvantage.

3) Our leader does not work full-time. Can we still apply?

Yes, we do work with organisations whose leaders are not full-time. However, we would need to be assured that the leader would have the capacity to engage fully with the programme over the 6 or 10-month period, which can be more difficult when not working full-time.

4) Our leader has been in position for less than 6 months? Can we still apply?

For new charity leaders, we suggest waiting until you've been in position for some time before applying. We find that people newer in position may not be best placed to engage meaningfully on the programmes. However, if you feel well-established in your role and feel that your organisation will benefit from organisational development, please feel free to apply, addressing this in your application, and we can discuss this in more detail at the assessment.

5) The turnover of our organisation is less than £100K - can we still apply?

Our support is focussed on small and medium sized organisations, but we require a degree of financial stability to engage on the programme effectively. If your organisation's income is lower than £100K but you are confident about your financial position, please feel free to apply and outline this in your application.

6) We applied to Pilotlight last year/2 years ago, etc – can we apply again?

If you have applied to Pilotlight in the past and were unsuccessful, you are still able to apply now. However, please consider, if the reason that you were unsuccessful before still applies, it may be the case that you will be unsuccessful again. In your application, please make clear what change has occurred since your previous application.

7) We participated in the Pilotlight Programme 5 years ago/10 years ago – can we apply again?

Yes, you can. Please set out in your application what you hope to gain from the programme this time.

8) How do we apply?

You will need to fill out a Digital Application Form on our website by clicking on the "[Apply Now](#)" button. As well as providing the information requested, please attach your existing strategic/business plan (if you have one), staff structure/organogram, most up-to-date financial documents (e.g. management accounts, budget), details of the skills on your board of trustees, safeguarding policies and articles of association (if you are a social enterprise/social business) and any other documents which would support your application.

9) What makes a good application?

The best applications show a clear understanding of how our programmes will be able to support you. When we select our Charity Partners, we want to ensure the team of Pilotlighters can have a high impact.

We find that the most successful projects also have a leadership that are engaged and motivated to be part of the process, open to change and challenge, and the capacity to really participate fully in the programme.

10) What happens after we apply?

We are reviewing applications on an ongoing basis. We may contact you if we need to clarify information in your application. If you are shortlisted, we will request some further information from you ahead of carrying out an assessment call.

The assessment call is usually conducted with the leader of the organisation and the Chair of Trustees (or equivalent). This is an opportunity for us to find out in more detail if we feel your organisation would be well-placed to benefit from support through our programmes.

Following the assessment, we will review all information as part of a Selection Committee following a recommendation from the assessor, we will then inform you of the outcome. If successful we will start working on putting together a team of Pilotlighters to work with you alongside a Pilotlight Project Manager, as well as complete some final administrative tasks.

11) What happens if our application is unsuccessful?

If you are not successful – either at application stage or following assessment – we will contact you to let you know and give you some feedback about why you weren't successful. If relevant we will also share details of other organisations that might be able to support you.

You may decide to apply again in the future if circumstances change. We also offer different programmes of support that may be more relevant to your organisation so we will always encourage you to visit our [website](#) to see what programmes of support we are offering. You can [sign up to our newsletter](#) to receive our latest news and opportunities for charities.

AFTER THE PROGRAMME

1. What happens after I complete a programme?

At the end of your programme, you will reflect on the progress made and objectives achieved. You will set some goals for the next six months which will be discussed at a six-month review meeting with your Project Manager and your team of Pilotlighters.

If there are any concerns or updates between the end of the programme and the six-month review, please get in touch with your Project Manager.

You will also be a part of our strong group of charity alumni and can opt-in to continue to receive information from Pilotlight.

2. Are there any other programmes that we can be involved in?

Absolutely! We have a number of different programmes to support our charity and social enterprise partners over time and we would encourage you to check our website regularly for these opportunities. Please feel free to speak to your Project Manager about these or contact the Charity Partnerships team on charitypartnerships@pilotlight.org.uk

12) Who do I contact if I have more questions not on this list?

Please contact charitypartnerships@pilotlight.org.uk with any additional questions you have or clarifications you need.

You can also attend one of our [online information sessions](#) which will give you a chance to learn more about our programmes and hear from Pilotlight Partner Charities and Pilotlighters. Please see our website for more details.