

The MCS Foundation 2026 Grant Round

Application Guidance

Version 1

Contents

1.	About The MCS Foundation	2
2.	2026 Grant Call	3
3.	Application and evaluation process.....	5
4.	Further enquires	6
5.	Appendix – Existing research.....	7

1. About The MCS Foundation

The MCS Foundation (the Foundation) is the operating name of the MCS Charitable Foundation, a UK registered charity. We were founded to oversee the MCS standards scheme for renewable energy across UK homes.

Supporting this important work remains fundamental, but our role as a Foundation goes further.

As a catalyst for change we convene partners from all parts of our sector – driving innovation to accelerate the use of carbon free energy in UK homes and other building types too. We support and develop action-orientated programmes to address critical issues like retrofitting UK homes at scale and expanding the skills-base that our sector urgently needs. And we commission robust, independent research that informs and shapes better decision making to drive a carbon free future for all UK homes.

2. 2026 Grant Call

Successful applications to our grant call will need to support delivery of:

- **Our vision:** That every UK home benefits from being carbon free
- **Our mission:** To transform the way our homes are heated, cooled and powered by reducing carbon and increasing electrification, energy efficiency and affordability

The maximum grant available will be £50,000 inclusive of VAT. A total funding pot of £400,000 is available and we therefore expect to be funding around eight grants, if the maximum amount of funding is requested.

In 2026, as well as looking for applications in line with our vision and mission, we have particular interest in the following four themes:

- The role of heat pump system efficiency and flexibility
 - Increased efficiency of individual heat pump heating systems can help lower running costs for households and reduce demand on the electricity grid. Similar benefits may be achieved through enabling flexibility, households increasing or reducing demand in response to pricing signals. This can involve combining heat pumps with energy storage or solar PV. We are interested in proposals exploring the benefits of heat pump heating system efficiency and/or flexibility and how to realise those benefits. We hope to better understand both the barriers and the benefits of efficiency and/or flexibility for households, landlords, electricity network operators and the UK government.
- How to better utilise data
 - Quantitative and qualitative data can help plan and deliver better outcomes for retrofit activities, whether by public authorities, social/private landlords, or energy system operators. We want to support projects that explore how data relating to people, properties or retrofit measures can be better utilised to deliver desired outcomes. We are also looking to support projects that will support collaboration between different stakeholders in the utilisation of data.
- Ways to support commissioning organisations to deliver low carbon heating
 - We are interested in projects that will develop capacity and knowledge for social and private landlords or public authority grant managers to commission and oversee low carbon heating installations. Additionally, we are looking for projects examining how the commissioning of retrofit works maximises local benefit, particularly with reference to jobs and supply chain development.
- How to use comfort as a driver for retrofit demand
 - [Research](#) commissioned by The MCS Foundation found that comfort in the home is a key driver in for homeowners' decisions about upgrading their homes. We are therefore interested in projects exploring how the idea of home comfort can effectively be used to drive the uptake of energy efficiency and renewable measures.

Information about existing research on each of these themes can be found in the Appendix below.

Please note, if your project does not fit within one of these themes but is working towards our vision and mission, we would still welcome your application. You can read more on the evaluation process and weighting in Section 3 below.

Applications may be submitted by any organisation, for profit or not-for-profit, registered charities, Community Interest Companies or public authorities. Please note, in accordance with charity commission regulations we cannot fund profit (e.g. an hourly rate including a profit component) and may require additional evidence to ensure this is complied with.

All outputs from a funded project must be made public on completion of the grant, except when this may breach regulations, such as the General Data Protection Regulations. Applications will need to include details of any output that is not going to be made public and state why.

Due diligence will be conducted on all short-listed applications using the Full Circl system and those deemed high risk will not be taken forward.

Any match funding being used for the project must be in place prior to application unless agreed with the Foundation Grants Manager.

All applications must be completed on the MCS Foundation Grant Application portal hosted by Good Grants which can be accessed here: themcsfoundationgrantsprogramme.awardsplatform.com. Please follow the instructions to create an account and complete the online application form. The application form can be downloaded as a pdf from the 'Start here' page for viewing offline. However, the application will need to be completed and submitted through the portal. If you are collaborating on a grant application, you can invite a collaborator using the + button under 'Collaborators' on the application page.

For all enquires please contact grants@mcsfoundation.org.uk and we will do our best to provide help.

3. Application and evaluation process

The application form and a guidance document are available from the MCS Foundation Grant Application portal hosted by Good Grants. You can access this through the [funding page](#) of The MCS Foundation website.

In 2026, the deadline for submitting applications will be Tuesday 31 March 2026 at midday. All applications must be submitted via the Good Grants portal.

Following this, applications will be evaluated against the following criteria and weighting:

- **Project planning** - Clarity and deliverability of project plan: 25%
- **Strategic fit** - How well the project fits with the mission of MCS Foundation: 20%
- **Logical argument** - Identifying a valid problem and steps to create change: 15%
- **Value for money** - Costs well researched/ justified and managed: 15%
- **Project evaluation** - Quality of plan to evaluate project: 10%
- **Identifying and mitigating risks** - Risks and mitigating actions well identified: 10%
- **Future Impact** - Long term impact beyond the timescale of the project: 5%

Following evaluation, a recommendation will be made to the Foundation’s Board of Trustees on which application to award grants to. We may also conduct interviews with applicants if deemed necessary at any stage to aid our decision making.

The Trustees will approve grant awards by the end of June, and applicants will be contacted after this with the outcome of their application. If you have been successful in being offered a grant, we will be in touch to arrange signing of a ‘Grant Funding Agreement’ and, once signed, delivery of the project can start.

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept
Open for applications							
Evaluate applications							
Trustee approval meeting							
Grant agreements offered							
Projects can start delivery							

4. Further enquires

All enquiries should be sent to grants@mcsfoundation.org.uk and a member of the team will get back to you. We will also be holding a webinar in March to discuss the grant programme further and answer any questions. Please see the [Funding page](#) for details.

The Foundation can provide feedback on project ideas by email in the first instance. While we can't guarantee we will be able to provide feedback, we will do our best to do so. To support our response, please provide us with a concise overview of the project idea and benefit.

Thank you for your interest in the MCS Foundation 2026 Grants Programme and best of luck with your application.

5. Appendix – Existing research

Below is a non-exhaustive list of existing research around each of our four themes. This is intended to give an indication of what work has already been done, both to inform applications and to avoid duplication.

The role of heat pump system efficiency and flexibility

- [Households could lose £375 annually due to low uptake of flexible energy tariffs - MCS Foundation](#)
- [Bridging the efficiency divide: open-source insights into UK heat pump performance gaps - ScienceDirect](#)
- [National Grid - EQUINOX \(Equitable Novel Flexibility Exchange\)](#)
- [Nesta - Money saving boiler challenge](#)
- [The future of heat | Nesta](#)
- [Future Energy Scenarios -NESO](#)

How to utilise data better

- [Digital platforms to support commercial retrofit | UKGBC](#)
- [Sweett: Retrofit for the Future: analysis of cost data](#)
- [Data and technology: strengthening our understanding for better retrofit outcomes - National Retrofit Hub](#)

Ways to support commissioning organisations to deliver low carbon heating

- [Understanding barriers to heat pump uptake in the private rental sector | Nesta](#)
- [How can home visits overcome consumer barriers to adopting low-carbon heating? | Nesta](#)

How to use comfort as a driver for retrofit demand

- [Homeowners motivations for energy efficiency upgrades - The MCS Foundation](#)
- [Attitudes to Retrofit Finance Report 2025 - The MCS Foundation](#)
- [The feeling of comfort in residential settings I: a qualitative model | Buildings & Cities](#)
- [Understanding comfort and senses in social practice theory: Insights from a Danish field study - ScienceDirect](#)
- [Exploring comfort in the home: towards an interdisciplinary framework for domestic comfort - Loughborough University](#)
- [Integrated framework of home comfort - University of St Andrews](#)