

The Transparency fund for Smaller Local Councils - Frequently asked questions

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1. What is the Transparency code for Smaller Authorities?

This code is issued to meet the government's desire to place more power into citizens' hands to increase democratic accountability.

The code is mandatory from 1 April 2015 and requires the online publication of key spending and governance information on the occasions specified in the Code. A full copy of the legislation can be found [here](#).

2. Which authorities can apply for this funding?

It applies to the following types of authorities with an annual turnover not exceeding £25,000:

- parish councils
- internal drainage boards
- charter trustees
- port health authorities

3. When does the funding begin?

NALC have planned a funding timetable to the end of the 2015/16 financial year. The funding will continue through 2016/17 but the frequency of applications may be altered.

The table below shows the application deadlines and the release of funds dates.

Action	November	December	January	February	March
Authorities to return form to CALCs	14/10/15	13/11/15	14/12/15	14/1/16	15/2/16
CALCs to application forms to NALC.	30/10/15	27/11/15	5/1/16	28/1/16	29/2/16
Board Sign off	5/11/15	8/12/15	12/1/16	4/2/16	7/3/16
NALC to release funds for approved bids to County Associations	14/11/15	18/12/15	18/1/16	15/2/16	17/3/16
CALCS to transfer money to authorities	30/11/15	8/1/16	1/2/16	29/2/16	31/3/16

Depending on funding availability.

4. What does “Turnover” mean?

Turnover is defined as the higher of an authority's gross income for the year and its gross expenditure for the year.

5. What happens if the Parish Council Turnover is around the £25k per annum mark.

In most circumstances a budget will have been set and it is best to work on that basis.

However this is a complex area and if you have need clarification please address questions via your County Association.

6. Can the Parish Council publish the salary information of Clerks? How does the Transparency Code requirement sit with the Data Protection Act in this case?

The Government believes that the personal information of local authority officials can be published compliantly with the Data Protection Act 1998. Parish Clerks as public employees should expect that personal information such as salary information may be made public and there is public interest in the accountability of the spending of public money. However, parish councils are best placed to apply the law to their own position, which may vary, and it is important that they carefully consider the requirements of the Data Protection Act and that any personal information is processed in a compliant manner to ensure the parish council is not in breach of the Data Protection Act. Advice can be found at <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/>.

7. What is a scanner?

A scanner is a device that scans documents and converts them into digital data. It can be used to produce a digital version of documents that are only available in paper form – for example the council's end of year return.

8. What if my authority is not a member of a County Association?

DCLG have asked NALC to administer the fund through the County Associations for all eligible authorities regardless of County Association membership and all applications will be treated equally.

9. What if my question is not answered in the list?

Please contact your local County Association. They will answer your query or refer it to NALC. This list will be updated twice a week as new queries come in.

10. Can printers be purchased with Transparency Fund money?

No

11. The council owns a computer but it is old, can a new one be purchased?

If the computer is so old that it cannot upload documents to a website then yes. However, if it is capable of doing so then the fund cannot provide an upgraded machine.

12. Should councils add VAT to the figure they are claiming?

No – all costs quoted in the application should be net of VAT.

13. What period can councils claim the monthly costs for?

The monthly costs can be claimed from when the website becomes live. So a council whose site goes live in October 2015 can claim six months costs in this funding period.

14. How do the monthly costs work?

For both internet subscription and monthly costs please indicate how many months of funding the council requires – e.g. if a council gets an internet connection in

November they can claim five months of this cost - November '15 to March '16. Please indicate this on the form.

15. What is the role of CALCs?

CALCS are taking the lead in communicating the fund to the Parish Councils and in coordinating, triaging, and sending the applications through to NALC. When applications are agreed, the CALCS are then sending the money directly to the successful parish councils.

16. The date boxes don't work.

The type of formatting is incorrect. NALC will enter the date.

17. Who do I email forms to?

Please mail forms to your county association – Please keep the forms in Excel format.

18. What happens in the 2016/17 financial year?

It is planned that the fund will be available for the years 15/16, 16/17 and 17/18. The availability of 16/17 funding will be confirmed by DCLG in 2016.