

28 MARCH 2017

TRANSPARENCY FUND TWO YEARS ON

It has now been two years since the Transparency Fund was launched and with just over three months of the NALC managed programme left, time is running out for parish and town (local) councils with an annual turnover of less than £25,000 to secure financial help to comply with the Government's Transparency Code.

The Code aims to put power back into communities' hands and improve transparency of local councils' finances by requiring them to make their accounts, audits, minutes and councillor information digitally available to the public.

To date, NALC has approved over 3,000 applications worth over £3.5 million to local councils. This has provided eligible councils with laptops, software, internet connections, websites, scanners and training, all with the aim to get local councils compliant with the Transparency Code.

Last month at the NALC annual conference in Milton Keynes, secretary of state for Communities and Local Government, Sajid Javid MP, hailed the work of local councils, county associations and NALC on the transparency fund in his keynote speech stating:

"I know that complying with (the Code) hasn't been straightforward for many of you. You're running very small operations, some of you didn't have the in-house expertise needed to get material online in an appropriate manner. Some of you didn't even have websites!

That's why my department invested £4.7 million in the transparency fund to help you meet the new standards.

"NALC know more about local councils than anyone, which is why we asked you to manage the fund through your county associations. And you've done a great job."

"Last time I checked, the grants team had approved well over 3,000 applications worth millions of pounds."

"That translates into hundreds of thousands of people gaining a greater insight and understanding of the work that their councillors do. And that means they will trust you more, support you more, and encourage you to do more."

We would like to extend Mr Javid's gratitude to all who have got involved with the Fund, and echo his praise for how the sector is embracing transparency and highlight a number of notable achievements take the opportunity over the past two years.

So far, the top performing county association for accessing grants for local councils is the Yorkshire Association of Local Councils with £271,000. Meanwhile, Hertfordshire Association of Town and Parish Councils were the most successful county association on engagement with their councils. They engaged with every eligible local council in their area and managed to get some councils to apply twice and through this have achieved a 160% engagement rate with their local councils.

NALC will be continuing to work with county associations to promote the fund to their local councils to follow in the footsteps of Yorkshire and Herefordshire -look out each month for our transparency fund top performers!

Please remember, the final deadline for the Transparency Fund is **12 February 2018** and we want to make sure councils don't miss out. Get your applications in to your county association before it is too late! Visit www.nalc.gov.uk/our-work/the-transparency-fund for more information