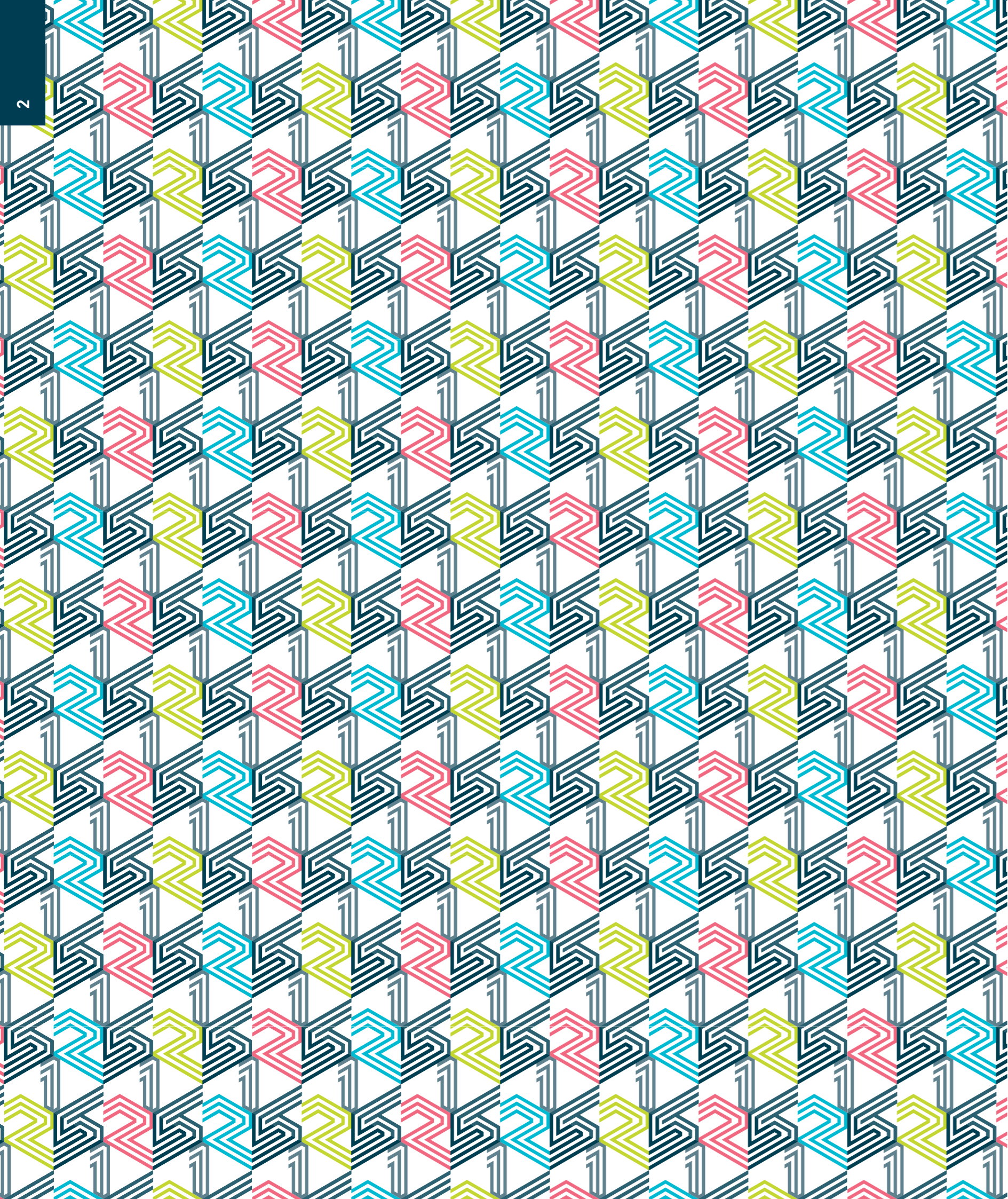


THE WILLIAM SUTTON PRIZE 2025



Prize for Connected
Communities - Guidance
for applicants.





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4 ABOUT THE WILLIAM SUTTON PRIZE

The housing crisis is one of the most significant challenges we face today as a society, and as the UK's largest housing association we know we have a part to play in tackling it. That's why we're proud to work with pioneers and innovators through The William Sutton Prize to find solutions that make a lasting impact.

In terms of health and wellbeing, increasing rates of loneliness and isolation, fragmented communities, the cost-of-living crisis and its impact on residents are just some of the issues experienced by the people who live in our homes across the country. Inclusive living environments are not about access alone - another key factor is community, which requires the design of enabling environments, and opportunities within physical, social and technological spaces to meaningfully connect.

Through The William Sutton Prize, we aim to drive new ideas to address these issues, creating opportunities for our residents to forge connections, promoting vibrant and inclusive communities.



Addressing these complex challenges demands collaboration with progressive individuals and organisations on the ground who are leading the way with new ideas and innovations. Over the last five years, The William Sutton Prize has awarded over £235,000 to support the development of high potential ideas that tackle some of the sector's most urgent challenges.

In 2025, we are partnering with the Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design at the Royal College of Art (RCA), a leading organisation in the field of inclusive design and social innovation, to focus specifically on identifying ways to create connected communities. The Centre has worked on over 300 research projects with over 200 organisations globally - their overarching goal being to seek out the challenges frequently overlooked and the communities frequently under-represented, and use design to improve life.

Through a combination of grant funding and a tailored package of business support, The William Sutton Prize supports disruptors and innovators in transforming exceptional ideas into tangible products, services, solutions, and interventions that deliver lasting benefits to the built environment and local communities within the sector.

The William Sutton Prize is named after the Victorian entrepreneur and philanthropist whose legacy created Clarion Housing Group. William Sutton was a visionary 19th-century entrepreneur who established the UK's first door-to-door parcel delivery service and dedicated his fortune to creating much-needed affordable housing. His legacy of innovation and entrepreneurship continues to inspire the Prize and underpins everything we stand for at Clarion.

In 2025, Clarion Housing Group will be celebrating the 125th anniversary of William Sutton's legacy pledge.

THE WILLIAM SUTTON PRIZE FOR CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

In 2025, we will be introducing The William Sutton Prize for Connected Communities, focused on creating new opportunities for community connection and citizen inclusion, in both process and outcomes.

We are looking for new and innovative proposals that help develop opportunities and spaces for communities to thrive. Alongside the Centre we are seeking impact-oriented ideas that have potential to improve the lived experience of social housing in terms of residents' physical, emotional and social wellbeing, promoting a healthy and welcoming environment for all.

No idea is too big nor too small; what matters is that ideas demonstrate clear potential for impact and scalability across the sector.

In addition to welcoming any idea that helps the social housing sector improve residents' emotional and physical wellbeing; we are particularly interested in receiving submissions that also work towards one or more of the following inter-related focus areas:

Innovative Technology Solutions:

people-driven technology interventions that break down barriers and enable communities to connect in intuitive and meaningful ways.

Intergenerational Interventions:

scalable new ideas that are desirable across age ranges, with potential to bridge generational divides and promote intergenerational interactions.

Social Inclusion: concepts and projects that engage under-served communities towards being heard, building communities through an intersectional lens.

Community Spaces: proposals that present novel and creative ways to bring communities together within a space to increase social networks, be it physical, virtual or a blend of both.

ELIGIBILITY

Who can apply?

The William Sutton Prize welcomes disruptors, innovators, researchers, leaders and creators of all kinds, with ideas that have the potential to transform the sector's approach to resident health, wellbeing, connectedness and community-building. We're interested in hearing from service and tech entrepreneurs, social enterprises and CICs, charitable organisations and community groups, academics and architects, designers and planners, or any group that has a compelling concept with potential for real world impact.

Previous experience in the social housing sector isn't essential - we encourage new perspectives. What matters most is that your idea communicates the potential for tangible impact on social housing and community connectedness, and demonstrates potential to drive lasting change on a national scale.

What types of organisations can apply?

Applications are welcome from both not-for-profit and commercial organisations, including registered charities, community interest companies, social enterprises, community groups, and other registered companies.

To be eligible, organisations must be registered to operate in England and must clearly demonstrate how their idea can benefit both current and future residents and communities.

Successful projects will be required to take place in England.

I am an individual can I still apply?

Yes, individuals who are residents of the UK and aged 18 or over are eligible to apply. We are seeking to identify strong ideas and individuals who demonstrate entrepreneurial thinking in developing opportunities and spaces where communities can thrive.

Please note, prize money cannot be paid into a personal bank account. As part of the application process, applicants will be asked to confirm agreement to at least one of the following requirements:

- Partner with an organisation
- Receive payment and/or support to deliver their chosen idea
- Be willing to register as a constituted organisation to receive the prize money for developing the winning idea.

What types of ideas are we looking for?

The Prize is open to all types of ideas and projects from any sector or discipline, as long as the proposition is clearly communicated and its potential impact clearly outlined.

At what stage of development does my idea have to be?

Ideas and innovations should be well-formed but can be in the earlier stages of development. We particularly encourage submissions that might typically be overlooked due to being pre-prototype or too radical.

The key is to present a well-considered and viable plan for advancing your idea. Our judges are looking for innovative and creative solutions that align with the core aims of the prize category.

PRIZE MONEY AND WIDER SUPPORT

What's on offer?

Winners can bid for up to £25,000 in grant funding and a tailored package of business support from Clarion to help grow their ideas and turn them into reality.

- 1 **Grant funding:** Applicants can bid for up to £25,000 of grant funding to further develop their idea. The amount of funding requested should reflect an amount that is needed to take the idea to the next stage of its development, and intentions around budget should be clearly outlined.
- 2 **Tailored support:** Winners will also receive a 12–18 month programme of project support from Clarion and the Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design to help further research, develop, test or scale their ideas.

Depending on the needs of the winners, this may include the following:

• Business support and advice

Business planning and routes to market

Legal advice

Commercial/procurement processes

Health and safety

Communications and marketing support

• Project support

1-2-1 project support with a selected group of Clarion stakeholders

Business sponsors

Shadowing opportunities

• Research and testing

Research and evaluation guidance

Access to user groups

Sites for testing, validating and piloting

Access to Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design methods, expertise and case-studies

• Networks

Invitations to events

Introductions to networks and contacts

William Sutton Prize Alumni Network

Opportunities to be included in Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design events and publications

All finalists will:

- be expected to attend the awards ceremony to celebrate the ideas and provide an opportunity to network with members of Clarion and the wider sector
- become part of a William Sutton Prize Alumni Network to connect and gain support from like-minded peers

What can the prize money be used for?

The prize money is intended to help advance the next steps in developing your idea. This could include collaborating with a partner to refine or further develop your concept, covering project management costs to move the idea forward, funding a pilot project, or consulting with the communities your idea aims to benefit.

What costs will the prize cover?

- ✓ Support for project management.
- ✓ Engagement of third-party services for design, delivery and development.
- ✓ Costs associated with piloting a concept, product or service.
- ✓ Costs for further research, consultation or engagement.
- ✓ Costs associated with evaluating or measuring the impact of ideas.
- ✓ Costs associated with replicating or scaling-up a new, or emerging, concept, product or service.
- ✓ Any other associated costs considered reasonable or essential by the Panel.

What costs won't the prize cover?

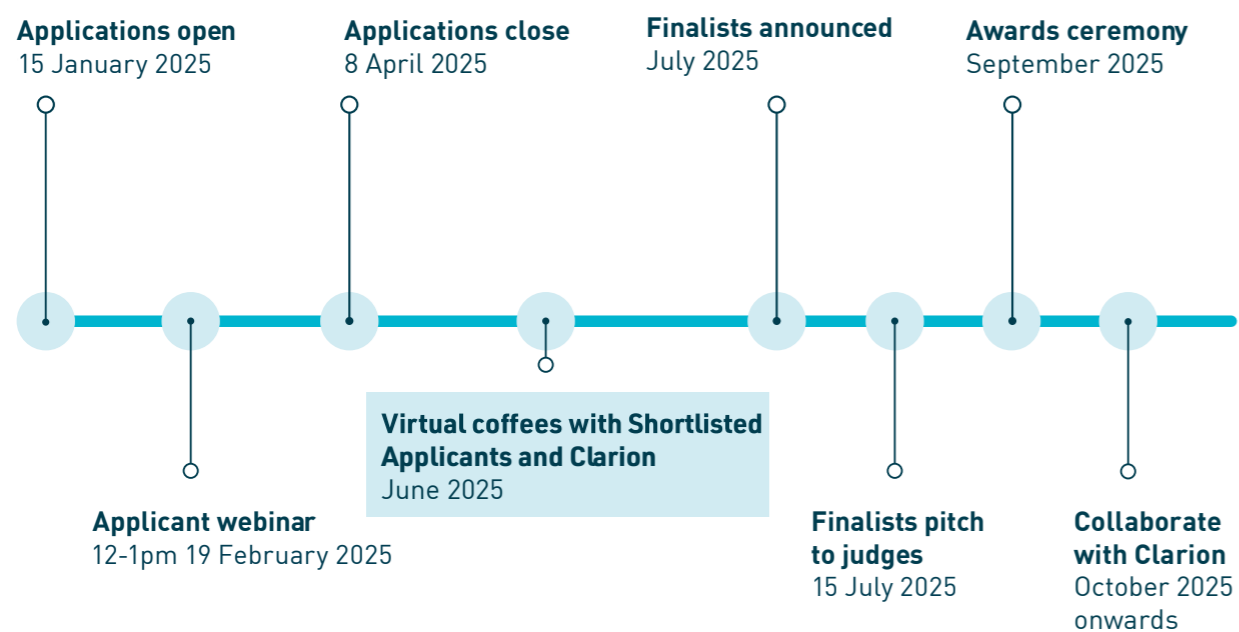
- ✗ Costs for activities that have already taken place.
- ✗ Costs for activities that stand to only benefit an individual.
- ✗ Costs that support activities based outside of England.
- ✗ Fees for academic or vocational courses/tuition fees/examinations.
- ✗ Personal expenses incurred during activity delivery.
- ✗ Any party-political activity.
- ✗ Any activities where individuals are excluded on religious grounds, ethnicity, gender, or sexuality.
- ✗ Any other costs considered unreasonable or non-essential by the Panel.

What is the total prize pot available?

Our total prize pot is £50,000. We can support up to 5 projects and are interested in hearing about ideas which need all levels of funding between £5,000 and £25,000.

APPLICATION TIMELINE

Application timeline and key dates



How do I apply?

Submit your application via our online system, Flexi-Grant: clarionfutures.flexigrant.com.

First, register and activate your account to access the form.

Applications must include a 1-minute video in .mov format or as a link (e.g., YouTube/Vimeo). More details are available on Flexi-Grant.

For additional access needs or application support, email: williamsuttonprize@clarionhg.com.

What is the application process?

Online applications must be submitted by **12 noon on Tuesday 8 April 2025** in order to be considered. Late entries will not be accepted.

Who decides the winners?

The William Sutton Prize Assessment Committee and Judging Panel oversees the selection of shortlisted applicants and winners based on set criteria.

Stage 1 APPLY

- Download the Guidance and/or attend a Zoom workshop to help plan and prepare your submission.
- Complete your submission online by 8 April 2025.
- Our Prize Panel will carefully review each application against key criteria (see next page).
- Applicants who are selected to go forwards will be invited to meet members of Clarion to talk more about their ideas.

Stage 2 SHORTLIST VIRTUAL COFFEE

- Submissions most closely aligning with the prize criteria will be shortlisted and invited to an informal 30-minute virtual coffee with members of Clarion in June 2025. The purpose is for both parties to get to know each other and discuss how Clarion could help support the development of your idea.
- Once all the sessions are complete, the Prize Panel will announce the Finalists, who will be invited to pitch their ideas to the William Sutton Prize Judges.

Stage 3 FINALIST PITCH

- Finalists will pitch their ideas to our judging panel made up of senior members of Clarion and high-profile sector leaders.
- You'll have 5–10 minutes to pitch your idea to the Judges followed by 15–20 minutes of Q&A.

Stage 4 AWARD CEREMONY

- Finalists will be invited to attend the Awards Ceremony in London in September 2025 (date to be confirmed).
- As well as celebrating all the shortlisted submissions and announcing the winners, you'll have the opportunity to network with members of Clarion and those from the wider sector.

Stage 5 COLLABORATE

- Winners will be individually invited to a planning session, where they will co-create an impact plan with key members of Clarion to define and agree how Clarion will help the development of their idea over the next 12 months.
- In parallel, an evaluation plan will be put together and implemented to monitor and assess the progress and impact of the partnership.

How will entries be assessed?

All applications will be reviewed using a standardised assessment framework. It is important to keep the following criteria in mind when completing your application.

• Challenge/problem/need

Is there a clearly defined challenge, problem or unmet need?

Has evidence been provided to support the existence of the challenge or need?

Is the problem large or significant for the sector?

• Innovation and uniqueness

Does the idea tackle the identified problem/challenge well?

Is there a gap in existing solutions that this idea fills?

How is this idea distinct from or an improvement upon existing solutions? What makes it unique?

How practical is it to implement the idea with the resources and constraints of the sector?

• Impact potential

What is the scale/depth of potential impact?

How will it make a positive impact on residents/communities/the environment?

Does the idea address immediate needs, long-term benefits, or both?

How will success be measured? Are the outcomes clearly presented?

• Scalability

Is there a longer-term vision/opportunity?

How replicable is the idea?

How scalable is the idea?

How sustainable is the idea operationally and financially after the initial funding?

• Financials

How will the funding be spent?

Is there a clear spending plan?

Is the requested funding sufficient to cover the project's key milestones and deliverables?

Is the spending plan aligned with achieving long-term sustainability or scalability of the idea?

What sort of supporting documents should I upload?

You will have the opportunity to upload up to six supporting images or documents to help the Judges better understand your product, concept or service.

We encourage the submission of images, plans, technical drawings, and supporting narrative or case studies that demonstrate both the impact of your entry and progress of your idea to date. However, please keep in mind that we receive a large number of applications, so it is important you present your idea and supporting documents in a clear and succinct way.

We also encourage you to make sure you provide a comprehensive overview of your idea in the answers of the online application form and not refer too heavily on your supporting documents. The Judges will be assessing your entry primarily on your application form answers and any supporting documents will be supplementary to this.

Do I have to submit a budget?

We will not require a detailed budget or business plan; however, the Judges will need to understand the estimated costs to demonstrate how the prize money will be used for the development or enhancement of your idea. Entries will be judged on the quality and potential of the idea, not a detailed business plan.

FAQs

My application has been shortlisted, what happens next?

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to an informal 30-minute virtual coffee with members of Clarion in June 2025. The purpose is for both parties to get to know each other and discuss how Clarion could help support the development of your idea.

What will happen if I cannot make the shortlist virtual coffee session?

Virtual coffees will be taking place in June 2025, so there should be enough time to find a window that works for everyone. If, for whatever reason, the session does not take place by late June 2025, we will unfortunately not be able to take your submission forward.

I've been selected as a finalist, what happens next?

Finalists will be invited to a Judges' Panel Day on 15 July 2025 to pitch their idea to the panel. You'll have around 5–10 minutes to pitch your idea to the Judges followed by 15–20 minutes of Q&A. Full details will be sent directly to shortlisted applicants with relevant requirements before the Panel Day.

What will happen if I cannot attend the Judges' Panel Day?

The Judges' Panel Day will be taking place on 15 July 2025 in London. We would encourage all applicants to hold this date once confirmed as finalists.

If you are unable to attend in person, please let us know so we can discuss options.

If you are unable to attend either in person or virtually, we will unfortunately not be able to take your submission forward.

What will happen if I cannot attend the Awards Ceremony?

If you are unable to attend in person, please let us know so we can discuss options.

If you are unable to attend either in person or virtually, we will contact you.

Will you fund travel and accommodation to the Panel Day and Awards Ceremony if I live outside of London?

If you believe you will be unable to finance your trip to London, please contact us.

My application was not shortlisted or selected as a finalist, what happens next?

Unfortunately, the Prize is not able to support every eligible application received. Unsuccessful applicants will receive emailed notification of the reason their application was not taken forward. All unsuccessful applicants will be eligible, and welcome, to reapply in future rounds.

I have a disability, what adjustments do you offer?

Clarion is committed to ensuring that The William Sutton Prize is accessible to everyone. If you have a disability or a chronic health condition, we can offer adjustments to the application e.g. submitting your response in an alternate format as well as the Judges Panel Day and Awards Ceremony.

Please contact our Prize Team at williamsuttonprize@clarionhg.com to discuss.

How do I get support with my application?

For support completing your online application form, queries regarding the deadline, eligibility criteria or submitting your proposal can be emailed to our Prize Team at williamsuttonprize@clarionhg.com

How will you use my information?

So we can process your application and keep you informed about the judging process, results and the subsequent awards event, we require clear consent from you to process the data you have supplied to us. This data will be collected, retained and securely processed strictly for the purposes of administering The William Sutton Prize. Data which has been gathered through your application is required for the organisation and administration of The William Sutton Prize and will be retained by Clarion Housing Group in line with the appropriate data retention policies.

Your contact details are required so we may correspond with you as an applicant regarding the status of your submission and the associated awards event. We will also require clear consent to contact you with regards to future William Sutton Prize application rounds, associated awards events and future funding opportunities. After giving consent for your data to be processed in this way, you may at any time withdraw your consent or request any clarification on how your data has been processed by contacting williamsuttonprize@clarionhg.com

The online application form will have a data consent statement for you to agree to before submitting your form. Full details of Clarion Housing Group's privacy notice can be found [here](#).

If there are any unanswered questions, please contact us at williamsuttonprize@clarionhg.com

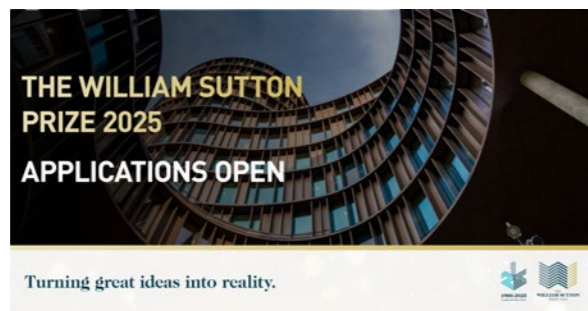
DIGITAL TOOLKIT

Please support our campaign

We've put together social media copy and graphics ([available to download here](#)) to help you show your support for The William Sutton Prize on X, LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram.

We need your help to spread the word about The Prize and would be grateful for any support you can provide. Please include **#WilliamSuttonPrize** in any posts.

X LinkedIn and Facebook



Social media content - for sharing

X

Applications for [@Clarion_Group](#) #WilliamSuttonPrize for Connected Communities are now open. Seeking new and novel ideas that enhance social housing residents' physical, emotional, and social wellbeing. Enter today at <https://bit.ly/3G15hC8>

Got a project that fosters community connections and promotes inclusion? Enter #WilliamSuttonPrize for Connected Communities and you could win up to £25k plus business support from [@Clarion_Group](#) and [@HHCDDesign](#) to make it happen! <https://bit.ly/3G15hC8>

If you have an idea to enhance social housing residents' physical, emotional, and social wellbeing, The #WilliamSuttonPrize for Connected Communities offers up to £25k + tailored support from [@Clarion_Group](#) and [@HHCDDesign](#). Enter today at <https://bit.ly/3G15hC8>

LinkedIn

Through The #WilliamSuttonPrize for Connected Communities, Clarion Housing Group seeks to collaborate with and support pioneering individuals and organisations with new and novel ideas that could actively enhance social housing residents' physical, emotional, and social wellbeing. If you have an idea that could foster community connections and promote citizen inclusion, apply today and you could receive up to £25k in grant funding plus business support from Clarion and the Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design, to take it to the next level. Apply by 8 April <https://bit.ly/3zjityQ>

Clarion Housing Group, the biggest social landlord in the country, is searching for game-changing ideas that enhance social housing residents' physical, emotional, and social wellbeing, creating healthier, more welcoming environments for all.

Do you have an idea that fosters community connections and promotes citizen inclusion? The #WilliamSuttonPrize for Connected Communities offers £25k in grant funding alongside tailored project support from Clarion and the Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design, to help your idea thrive. Apply by 8 April: <https://bit.ly/3zjityQ>

Facebook

Returning for its sixth year, Clarion Housing Group's #WilliamSuttonPrize is now open for applications.

New for 2025, The William Sutton Prize for Connected Communities supports impacted ideas that enhance social housing residents' physical, emotional, and social wellbeing.

The Prize provides business support from Clarion and the Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design to help turn bright ideas into reality. Applicants can bid for up to £25k in grant funding until midday on 8 April. Apply today at <https://bit.ly/3TYWB55>

Calling all changemakers, community-builders, and social innovators! Clarion Housing Group wants to hear from you.

The #WilliamSuttonPrize for Connected Communities is seeking radical ideas to improve social housing residents' physical, emotional, and social wellbeing.

If you have an idea that fosters community connections and promotes citizen inclusion, apply today and you could receive up to £25k in grant funding plus business support from Clarion and the Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design, to take it to the next level.

<https://bit.ly/3TYWB55>

Instagram



Instagram

Returning for its sixth year, [@clarion.housing](#) #WilliamSuttonPrize is now open for applications.

New for 2025, The William Sutton Prize for Connected Communities funds innovations that have the potential to improve social housing residents' physical, emotional, and social wellbeing. The Prize provides business support from Clarion and the Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design [@hhcdesignrca](#), to help turn bright ideas into reality.

Applicants can bid for up to £25k in grant funding until midday on 8 April. www.clarionhg.com/william-sutton-prize

The #WilliamSuttonPrize for Connected Communities is now open for applications, and [I'm / we're] helping [@clarion.housing](#) to spread the word.

If you're working on something that could improve social housing residents' physical, emotional, and social wellbeing, benefiting residents and communities, Clarion and the Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design [@hhcdesignrca](#) want to hear from you.

Applicants can bid for up to £25k in grant funding until midday on 8 April. www.clarionhg.com/william-sutton-prize



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