

Working to put people in the lead

With the aim of improving communities and lives, the Big Lottery Fund is currently seeking a dynamic new Scotland Director

AFTER UK and Scottish Government involvement, the Big Lottery Fund (the Fund) is the main provider of funding within the Scottish community and voluntary sector.

Funding around 2,500 organisations in Scotland every year from the good cause pool set aside from National Lottery takings, it is a body that has become part of the fabric of Scottish life.

It's a great starting point for the Fund's next Scotland Director, for whom a search has just begun.

Chief Executive Dawn Austwick is sad to see incumbent of 11 years Jackie Killeen go – to become the British Council's Scotland Director. "She'll be much missed", says Austwick.

The search is now on for an equally dynamic person to take the Fund to the next stage in Scotland, and to form part of a wider energetic and ambitious UK-wide senior

management team. "The Scotland Director leads the Big Lottery Fund's activity in Scotland and is a member of the Fund's senior management team," the CEO explains.

"There are specific and important Scottish dimensions which will always heavily inform how we fund in Scotland. But there are challenges that face all the countries of the UK which we will deal with as a UK body.

"Public spending will remain tight across the UK and communities need to be supported in developing their resilience and ability to thrive in a changing world. We need to be relevant and connected across the UK in order to add value to Scotland by being more than the sum of the parts."

Responding to developments such as the explosion in digital and demographic shifts, the Fund is working to make the best use of

funding to put people in the lead, which is the driver for its work across the UK.

Looking specifically at Scotland, the Fund has a budget of approximately £70 million to distribute to good causes.

In November 2015 Big Lottery Fund in Scotland opened a new responsive funding portfolio, set to run until 2020 and offering grants from £10,000 to £1 million. It will invest to improve both lives and

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communities across Scotland by putting people in the lead.

"We are asking all groups seeking funding from us to put people at the heart of their work, to focus on the strengths that people can bring and build through their activity, and to ensure they are connected to others working around them," Austwick adds.

"We made our first grants from the new portfolio in March. Funded by the Scottish Government and delivered in partnership with Highlands and Islands Enterprise, we have also just announced the new Scottish Land Fund, offering grants of up to £1 million supporting communities across the country to develop and run local assets, such as community buildings and spaces, which will make a difference to their lives."

The Fund's popular small grants schemes, such as "Awards for All", help grassroots voluntary action in

literally hundreds of local communities every year.

It has a focus on supporting people to work together in neighbourhoods and communities, realising the strengths, relationships and aspirations of local people and using community assets to meet shared ambitions and challenges.

The value of these funding contributions is significant, but is combined with an asset based approach and access to resources and support beyond the money to achieve long term returns for people and communities.

Around 100 staff are based in the Fund's office for Scotland in central Glasgow. Austwick emphasises: "Our grant making is country specific: each of our teams understands the country context and therefore brings insight and knowledge to our decision making.

"We don't have a strong view on what background the successful

candidate will have. More important are their personal qualities.

"So: what are they like as a leader; have they experience of working in an organisation of our type and size; what is their management track record; do they understand and can they drive forward our strategic priorities in Scotland; how will they pick-up where Jackie left off and make our funding in Scotland support people and communities to improve the quality of life in their communities?"

"We're interested in the skills and personal attributes the person will bring. This means a knowledge and understanding of the environment and sectors in which the Fund operates in Scotland and more widely. We are looking for someone with the ability to inspire and collaborate internally and externally – demonstrating leadership qualities coupled with warmth, integrity and humility."



QUALITY OF LIFE: Annexe Communities' 'Connects2 Project' is funded by the Big Lottery Fund and supports isolated older people in North West Glasgow.