



Condition Improvement Fund Checklist

We have developed this checklist to assist eligible institutions as they prepare to apply for annual capital funding from the Condition Improvement Fund (CIF).

Due to funding limitations, fewer schools and projects receive CIF funding each year. Consequently, it is becoming increasingly important to start preparing applications early so that you have enough time to include sufficient independent evidence to demonstrate the urgency of the project you are applying for. This checklist will help guide you through the process:

Are you eligible? Eligible academies, sixth-form colleges and voluntary-aided (VA) schools can apply for the Condition Improvement Fund and will be invited to apply by the DfE. Please see [last year's guidance](#) for further information on eligibility.

Identify Priority Projects: The fund aims to address significant condition needs to keep education providers' buildings safe and in good working order. This includes funding projects that address health and safety issues, building compliance and buildings in poor condition. The fund also supports a small number of expansion projects. These are for academies, sixth-form colleges and VA schools rated good or outstanding by Ofsted that can demonstrate a need to expand.

Gather Data and Documentation:

Collect all relevant data and documentation to support your application. Having this information ready will streamline the application process and strengthen your bid.

- 1. Condition surveys:** to cover elements such as structural frame and building fabric, mechanical and electrical, asbestos, drainage, utilities and fire safety. Must be within the last three years. S2e can assist if you need new or updated condition surveys.
- 2. Photographs:** include clear, detailed, and relevant photographs to support your bid.
- 3. Independent evidence and support:** include independent, expert technical advice and specialist surveys to support your proposal, e.g. surveys, engineer reports and site layout plans.
- 4. Regulatory compliance information:** provide letters about compliance from a qualified professional relevant to the specific issue e.g. from a fire safety inspection or electrical engineers. If you are applying for safeguarding issues, you need robust evidence to support urgency of need such as incident reports or police reports.
- 5. Evidence of impact on teaching:** such as Ofsted reports highlighting consequences of poor facilities on teaching and learning.
- 6. Arrange external approvals in advance:** if you require LA planning approval or Section 77 assessment or external sources of funding.
- 7. Good Estate Management for Schools (GEMS):** providing relevant evidence from your self-assessment, asset management plan and estate strategy will enhance your score.



Create a Detailed Project Plan

- 1. Clear and detailed delivery plan:** showing how, when and by whom the project will be delivered.
- 2. Minimise Disruption:** implement project phasing, i.e. plan project delivery around school holidays.
- 3. Provide a task-based risk register:** prove you have planned in detail for the range of risks inherent in building projects, from Health & Safety to scope changes and delays.



Budgeting and Financial Planning

1. **Prepare a detailed budget:** show transparency and sound financial management to instil confidence in the funding body.
2. **Show your costings clearly and in as much detail as possible:** the more certain your costs, the lower the financial risk, i.e. multiple tenders or formal quotes are better than estimates.
3. **Be realistic:** underestimates put you at risk of going over budget, and you are highly unlikely to be awarded extra funding after project approval.
4. **Client contribution:** you can obtain a higher score and improve your chances by making a financial contribution to the project.
5. **Financial contributions:** make sure you can afford any financial contributions you put forward. If you cannot, your project may have to be value engineered or cancelled.
6. **Repayments:** ensure the repayments on any CIF loans you intend to take out are affordable.

Seek Professional Support

If needed, engage professionals to assist with the application process. Their expertise can help strengthen your bid, provide accurate assessments, and ensure compliance with regulations. As qualified chartered building surveyors with over a decade of experience in bidding for CIF, we can assist you on your submissions on a 'no win – no fee' basis.

Make your CIF application a success

The Condition Improvement Fund presents a valuable opportunity for schools and academies to secure funding for essential infrastructure projects. By preparing well in advance, adhering to the guidelines, and utilising this handy checklist, you can increase your chances of a successful application. Remember, the next round will open in autumn, with a December deadline, so start your preparations now.

If you would like help applying for Condition Improvement Funding, contact us directly on **0116 5070130 or email **enquire@s2e.org.uk**.**