
**VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR FUNDING:
PILOT COMMUNITY BASED INITIATIVES**

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide an overview of the planned implementation of pilot community based initiatives utilising Future Fund and Voluntary Sector Development Fund monies.

Background

2. A number of funding opportunities have been made available to Community and Voluntary sector organisations following the implementation of the Medium Term Financial Plan in June 2016. These are the:
 - (a) Voluntary Sector Development Fund (£100,000, £50,000 of which is to be used specifically to support vulnerable children).
 - (b) Match Funds for bids to CDCF (£20,000).
 - (c) Fund to promote Public Sector Volunteering (£50,000).
3. Of the £170,000 available funding, £142,000 remains unallocated, and in early 2018, COE agreed that work be undertaken to identify ways in which this funding could be utilised to improve outcomes for local people. It must also be noted that this funding is non-recurring.

Process

4. A series of workshops were held with the aim of: strengthening collaborative working between local statutory and voluntary sector organisations, and developing community based initiatives which will be piloted, monitored and evaluated during 2018/19. The findings from this work will be used to inform future commissioning intentions.
 5. The workshops were very well attended with representation from the Council, the Police, Health, Education, the Fire Brigade and a wide range of both small and large community and voluntary sector organisations.
 6. Colleagues in attendance agreed to focus on two key issues notably: preventing social isolation in adults and older people (thereby preventing people requiring more intrusive health and social care interventions), and supporting vulnerable families with children and young people at the earliest opportunity (thereby preventing children and young people coming into the care of the Council).
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7. The following community based initiatives have been proposed:

Preventing Social Isolation in Adults and Older People

Initiative 1: Small Sparks Fund - £25k

8. Funding will be made available to pay for one-off items which will support people who are at risk of isolation. This could either be for an individual or for a group of people who want to establish a small group such as those which have been developed successfully in other areas (for example, Pins and Needles, Knit and Natter, Whitley Warblers etc).
9. It has also been proposed that an approach such as that used in “Planning for Real” could also be adopted whereby the proposed initiatives are presented to the public who would vote on which one of them should be funded. This approach could also support the use of future crowd funding for the projects.

Initiative 2: Supporting the ongoing work being undertaken by the Police who have been working with Mutual Gain - £20k

10. The purpose of MutualGain is to: empower organisations and communities; to promote greater participation and active citizenship, and to increase social capital for the mutual benefit of the entire community. A coaching model of support is used as part of this work to uncover individual values, motivations and goals.
11. Community coaches (volunteers who live in the community) will be developed who will work with vulnerable families, children and young people, supporting them to identify their own solutions to issues which are affecting them. Funding will be made available to these coaches for one off items which will have the maximum impact in addressing the specific issues identified by people they are working with.

Initiative 3: Supporting the ongoing work being undertaken by new Care Coordinators who will be based within GP practices - £30k

12. A new Care Coordinator role is being developed within the Borough. The Coordinator will be based within GP practices and will:
 - (a) Support patients to have better control of their health and wellbeing.
 - (b) Improve social and community support mechanisms by: maximising the use of appropriate services and community assets; increasing signposting to and utilisation of the VSCE services, and identifying gaps in service provision.
 - (c) Reduce dependence on traditional social care support services and reduce reliance on urgent, emergency and out of hours services.
 13. Funding will be made available to support the role of the Care Coordinator particularly in ensuring that once community based support is identified for individuals at risk of isolation, they are enabled to access these. This may be in the development of volunteer befrienders or volunteer car drivers.
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Supporting Vulnerable Families with Children and Young People at the Earliest Opportunity

Initiative 4: Early Help Fund - £37k

14. This money will be available to strengthen the Early Help offer for children and young people living in Darlington.
15. Part of the fund will be managed by officers within the new Edge of Care service and will be made available to all of schools across the borough to pay for one-off items which will support children and young people who are from vulnerable families and are at risk of poor school attendance. The fund will be allocated based on the individual need of the child/family.
16. The fund will also be used to encourage third sector organisations who currently do not operate within Darlington to develop services which support vulnerable children and young people, particularly those who are “hard to reach”.

Initiative 5: Supporting the ongoing work being undertaken by the Police who have been working with Mutual Gain - £20k

17. The purpose of MutualGain is to: empower organisations and communities; to promote greater participation and active citizenship, and to increase social capital for the mutual benefit of the entire community. A coaching model of support is used as part of this work to uncover individual values, motivations and goals. Community coaches (volunteers who live in the community) are developed who will work with vulnerable families, children and young people supporting them to identify their own solutions to issues which are affecting them. Funding will be made available to these coaches for one off items which will make the maximum impact in addressing the specific issues identified by people they are working with.

Initiative 6: Working together - £10k

18. Children and young people should be supported to lead and influence both the development of community interventions and the design of local services.
 19. Local community and voluntary sector agencies will be supported to employ young people, who have themselves been in the care system, to engage and work with other children and young people to inform the future commissioning of support services. These young people could also be involved in monitoring the quality of services being delivered to children and young people within the Borough.
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Next Steps

20. Clear processes of application and administration of funding requests and allocations to be developed (Initiatives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5).
21. A process to monitor outcomes and impact for each of the initiatives outlined above to be designed.
22. Identify a local organisation who can support the work being proposed in Initiative 6.
23. Establish a steering group who will oversee the implementation of the agreed pilot initiatives.

Recommendation

24. It is recommended that Scrutiny:
 - (a) To note the pilot initiatives outlined in this report.
 - (b) Receive an update following the monitoring and evaluation phase of this work in 2019.

Suzanne Joyner
Director of Children and Adults Services