



Transformation
Partners
in Health and Care

Case Study 2
Community Chests for
Social Prescribing

Community Opportunities Small Grants Process

Herts Valleys CCG



Summary

Herts Valleys CCG ran a funding initiative called the Community Opportunities Small Grants Process in 2020. Following the pandemic in March 2020, it was suspended and reopened with a specific remit to support the community in the context of COVID-19.

Total funding

£440k
CCG Funding

Award Size

£10k per
organisation

Number of Awards

40 funded
organisations

Who funds the Community Chest?

Herts Valleys CCG, with minimal additional funding from NHSE social prescribing champion fund (£25K) and Hertfordshire Community Council (HCC) (£15K).

Who is the fund for?

Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) organisations who support people living in Herts Valleys Black and Minority Ethnic communities.

What did it fund?

- Delivery of services in a COVID-proof way (during 2020/21).
- New types of support for people impacted by COVID.
- Collaborative work with other organisations.
- Community Navigators - commissioned to identify gaps and solutions without formal commissioning.
- Alleviating preventative services waiting lists, e.g. dementia singing groups and a hoarding support service.
- Supporting groups to go remote e.g. Elhers Danlos Association and a Sickle Cell support group.

Who runs it?

The fund was set up and run by Herts Valleys CCG.

How much funding is available?

- £440,000 was allocated across the whole CCG.
- Organisations could apply for up to £10k.
- The majority of funding bids from VCFSEs were around £5k.

How did it work?

- The application process was short and simple, based on a six-question selection.
- A simple memorandum of understanding (MOU) was established with organisations, which also listed outcomes measures.
- Evaluation measures were agreed with commissioners at the point of award, based on the remit and need of each organisation.



Impact

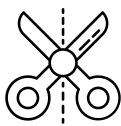
- ✓ £400k of funding allocated across the VCFSE sector.
- ✓ The fund enabled organisations to continue operating during the pandemic.
- ✓ Out of 61 applications, over 40 organisations were funded.

Funded projects ranged from:

Larger organisational projects such as those run by Age UK; a local community centre delivering COVID-safe activities; a charity supporting mothers to provide donor milk to babies at risk of COVID; a befrienders scheme to support those with vision loss during the pandemic.



Innovations



Cutting red tape and acting quickly: the fund enabled support to organisations close to shutting down due to COVID.



Working with organisations to understand need: the CCG gathered a significant amount of important data through a widely distributed survey.



Flexible and adaptable application processes: where organisations or groups faced barriers to filling in application forms, they were contacted by a member of the grant team for a verbal application.

Learnings and Ambitions

- How could the funding follow an individual?
- It is important to avoid a culture of 'rationing', especially for link workers as this can be counterproductive to the link worker/patient relationship.
- It can be a challenge for the CCG to truly commission at a local level.
- It is vital to have enough information to account for fund impact.
- Ambition to create toolkits to support different types of stakeholders to funding, e.g. supporting GP charities to run their own grant schemes hyperlocal.
- Crowdfunding by the local councils and community foundations was introduced in subsequent rounds as a way to boost funding.
- The fund should be established or committed to on a yearly cycle. This would provide sustainability and stability for future integration.