

# Evaluation of the Doncaster Community Fund Prospectus: interim report

October 2014



# Evaluation of the Doncaster Community Fund Prospectus: final report

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# Acknowledgements

The Evaluation of the Doncaster Community Fund Prospectus has been undertaken by the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (CRESR) at Sheffield Hallam University as part of a wider academic partnership between Sheffield Hallam University and the University of Sheffield, and Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council (DMBC) Adults and Communities Directorate, NHS Doncaster CCG (DCCG) and health and social care delivery partners. In completing this report we are grateful to individuals from the public, voluntary and community sectors who gave up their time to participate in the study. We are also grateful to DMBC staff who provided data and contacts, and facilitated the organisation of fieldwork and interviews.

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# Summary

## Introduction

This is the final report of an independent evaluation of the Doncaster Community Fund Prospectus (CFP) being undertaken by the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (CRESR) at Sheffield Hallam University. The evaluation is part of a wider academic partnership between Sheffield Hallam University and the University of Sheffield, and Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council (DMBC), NHS Doncaster CCG (DCCG) and health and social care delivery partners. The evaluation took place between January 2014 and August 2016. This report builds on two previous outputs from the evaluation: interim evaluation (October 2014); Innovation Fund Focus Report (May 2015).

## The Doncaster Community Fund Prospectus

The Community Fund Prospectus operates from 2013-16 and has three main elements:

- Seed Fund (SF) - small grants funding available to individuals and groups to support the development of collective activity. Grants are available borough-wide (with an initial focus on East Doncaster) and are made available by DMBC Communities teams.
- Making it Real (MIR) - grants available to community and user-led groups, to increase sustainability to support local needs. Grants of between £250 and £10,000 are available for the financial year 2013-14 (reduced to £7,500 in 2014-15). The fund is managed by New Horizons (voluntary sector infrastructure provider for DMBC).
- Innovation Fund (IF) - this fund supports the commissioning of new services from a range of providers, with a focus on creativity, innovation and person-centred approaches. Two levels of investment opportunity are available: £10-30,000 and over £30,000, over 12 or 24 months from January 2014. The Innovation Fund has six outcome themes: Information, Advice and Guidance; Access and Transport; Social Isolation; Early Intervention and Prevention; Carers; Health and Wellbeing.

The Doncaster Community Fund Prospectus can be viewed at [http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/sections/socialcareforadults/workinginpartnership/Doncaster\\_Community\\_Funding\\_Prospectus\\_2013\\_16.aspx](http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/sections/socialcareforadults/workinginpartnership/Doncaster_Community_Funding_Prospectus_2013_16.aspx)

## The Evaluation

The aim of the evaluation is to undertake an in-depth quantitative and qualitative review of the Community Fund Prospectus, with a focus on assessing its impact and replicability as a model for commissioning community-based and preventative services. The study runs from April 2014 to March 2015 and has three main objectives:

- To assess the degree to which the Community Fund Prospectus has been a catalyst for innovative and effective responses to prevention and local priority needs.
- To assess the degree to which the Prospectus has been co-produced and is inclusive.
- To assess whether the Prospectus is a cost-effective model for commissioning.

This report draws on primarily qualitative data to assess the early implementation of the Prospectus. A final evaluation report in 2015 will provide evidence on CFP outcomes.

## **The CFP Process**

The process has been robust and inclusive, although there was scope for a greater involvement from the VCS in the development phase of the CFP. Applicants have appreciated the openness and accessibility of the Fund, and there is consensus that there were appropriate timescales and support available to applicants. It would be beneficial in future rounds to build additional time into the process of considering IF applications, and to ensure that MIR applicants get the best response possible by supporting them to submit proposals which clearly meet the criteria for the fund.

## **CFP grants**

CFP has supported 55 organisations in the Borough, and awarded a total of £1,367,172 to projects which aim to meet community need. Resources have been allocated widely across the Borough. The Prospectus has provided an opportunity to develop groups and services that have not previously been supported by the local authority.

## **The impact of CFP**

Further evidence is needed to establish the impact of the Prospectus on improved outcomes for vulnerable individuals but there have already been positive impacts on the capacity of groups and organisations and within the voluntary and community sector as a whole. The Prospectus has acted as a catalyst for improving relationships between DBMC and the voluntary and community sector in the Borough.

## **Recommendations**

The interim findings lead to a number of recommendations, which are presented under four headings: process and implementation; building strong relationships; developing the CFP model.

### ***Process and implementation***

The CFP represents a robust process which has in the main been well implemented. Recommendations under this heading relate to improving the efficiency of decision making, and reviewing the connectivity between the three strands of the Fund.

- The CFP steering group should consider ways in which decision making processes can be improved across the CFP: reviewing timescales (particularly in relation to the IF); working with New Horizons to ensure that there is efficient process which offers the best support to MIR applicants; and ensuring that there is shared understanding amongst those responsible for allocation of the Seed Fund in relation to how best to allocate the resource to meet local need.
- The CFP steering group should consider options for developing stronger connections between the three funding streams through, for instance, bringing together those involved in decision making in the various funds to discuss challenges and opportunities associated with implementing the CFP. There may be particular benefits to providing opportunity for panel members involved in MIR and IF to share experience and learning.

### ***Building strong relationships***

There is clear evidence that the CFP has acted as a catalyst for improved relationships between the voluntary and community sector and DMBC and its partners. Some minor early implementation issues notwithstanding, the CFP has been well received by the VCS and is generally seen as a 'step in the right direction'. Recommendations under this heading advocate using the CFP as a

platform for ongoing dialogue across the sectors and which continues to build strong relationships and which supports the continued co-production of the CFP.

- DMBC should share the key findings of this report widely with the VCS in Doncaster.
- Consideration should be given to the establishment of a regular forum for review of the CFP, involving a range of stakeholders across the public and voluntary and community sectors. Key issues that the forum might address include developing consensus around innovation, ways in which current gaps in provision can be addressed, and the opportunities and challenges for VCS organisations responding to the Prospectus.
- It is recommended that the VCS is consulted (perhaps through the relevant infrastructure support organisations) in relation to the format, and scope, of this forum.

### *Developing the CFP model*

As outlined above, the CFP is an innovative and new approach to supporting community and preventative services in Doncaster. A future challenge is moving from an essentially 'pilot' programme to one which is embedded as a model which supports the ongoing development of community capacity and which provides sustainable solutions to community need. Recommendations under this heading relate to ensuring that the CFP model continues to be developed on the basis of robust evidence to support commissioning and decommissioning decisions, and reviewing aspects of the Fund to ensure that it is a practical, and flexible, framework.

- Within the context of best practice in commissioning and procurement, and in consultation with all stakeholders, DMBC should consider options for a more strategic and targeted approach to commissioning services under IF outcomes which are not currently being met. This might involve working more directly with certain providers to co-produce responses to unmet need.
- The CFP steering group should review the terms of the Seed Fund. In particular there is a need to consider the benefits and challenges associated with a clearer criterion for awards, and the pros and cons of limiting risk by placing an upper limit on awards that can be made through the Fund, particularly to unconstituted groups.
- DMBC should work with funded groups and organisations to ensure that robust, and relevant, outcomes data is available which can be used to establish the impact of the CFP. It is important that this data is proportionate, and that it reflects the outcomes of the activity funded. These are likely to include increased community engagement and capacity, as well as improved outcomes for isolated individuals.
- Demonstration of the value for money of the CFP necessitates the collection of robust data on costs, outputs and outcomes. DMBC should also consider the possibilities of capturing data on the wider 'value' of the CFP by demonstrating, for instance, increased numbers of volunteers associated with the groups and services supported by the Fund, and increased resources levered in as a result of CFP funds (including grants and personal budgets).
- There is a need to engage stakeholders, including the VCS, in discussion around the sustainability of groups and services funded through the CFP. This should include consideration of the basis on which decisions about continued funding (or not) are made, and working with the VCS to explore realistic options for alternative sources of support within the context of constrained public sector resources. These will vary for different organisations and services but might include self-fundraising, charging for services, other grants and other vehicles such as loans, social investments and social enterprise.

# Introduction

This is the interim report of an independent evaluation of the Doncaster Community Fund Prospectus (CFP) being undertaken by the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (CRESR) at Sheffield Hallam University.

## 1.1. About the Community Fund Prospectus

The Community Fund Prospectus is a new and innovative approach to supporting the development and commissioning of preventative and community-based adult services in Doncaster. The Fund operates from 2013-16 and has three main elements:

- Seed Fund (SF) - a fund of £100,000 for small grants funding available to individuals and groups to support the development of collective activity and to combat social isolation. Grants are available borough-wide (with an additional focus on East Doncaster) and are made available by DMBC Communities teams. There is no formal application process or panel associated with this fund.
- Making it Real (MIR) - a fund of £100,000 grants available to community and user-led groups, to increase sustainability to support local needs. Grants of between £250 and £10,000 are available in the financial year 2013-14 (reduced to £7,500 in 2014-15). The fund is managed by New Horizons. Decisions on grant applications are made by an independent panel comprising representatives of public and voluntary and community sector organisations.
- Innovation Fund (IF) - this £1.5m fund supports the commissioning of new services from a range of providers, with a focus on creativity, innovation and person-centred approaches. Two levels of investment opportunity are available: £10-30,000 and over £30,000, over 12 or 24 months from January 2014. The Innovation Fund has six outcome themes: Information, Advice and Guidance; Access and Transport; Social Isolation; Early Intervention and Prevention; Carers; Health and Wellbeing. Decisions on grant applications are taken by a panel comprising representatives of health and social care commissioning organisations.

The Doncaster Community Fund Prospectus can be viewed at [http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/sections/socialcareforadults/workinginpartnership/Doncaster\\_Community\\_Funding\\_Prospectus\\_2013\\_16.aspx](http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/sections/socialcareforadults/workinginpartnership/Doncaster_Community_Funding_Prospectus_2013_16.aspx)



## 1.2. About the evaluation

The evaluation of the Community Fund Prospectus is part of a wider academic partnership between Sheffield Hallam University and the University of Sheffield, and Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council (DMBC), NHS Doncaster CCG (DCCG) and health and social care delivery partners. The partnership is carrying out an evaluation of the Supporting and Maintaining Independence Programme (SMIP), which forms part of the suite of integrated health and social care services being delivered in Doncaster through the Better Care Fund (BCF). The programme evaluation runs from January 2014 to March 2016 and has a number of objectives:

- to evaluate the impact of SMIP activity over the two years;
- to assess the economic and social value of the programme;
- to increase the research and evaluation capacity, skills and knowledge of DMBC adults and communities directorate and its partners.

A number of activities are being undertaken:

- The development and implementation of a Doncaster Outcomes Tool (DOT) to capture common quality of life outcomes across a range of health and social care services.
- Assessment of the economic and social value of the programme, using a 'blended value' approach which combines cost-benefit analysis with consideration of wider social return on investment.
- In-depth research into two aspects of the programme: the hospital discharge pathway; and the Community Fund Prospectus.
- A series of capacity building activities, including workshops and direct mentoring, to build research and evaluation capacity within DMBC and partner organisations. This strand of activity also includes placement of post-graduate students in the Adults and Communities Directorate.

## 1.3. The Community Fund Prospectus evaluation

The aim of the Community Fund Prospectus evaluation is to undertake an in-depth quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the Prospectus, with a focus on assessing its impact and replicability as a model for commissioning community-based and preventative services. The CFP evaluation runs from April 2014 to March 2015 and has 3 main objectives:

- To assess the degree to which the Community Fund Prospectus has been a catalyst for innovative and effective responses to prevention and local priority needs.
- To assess the degree to which the Prospectus has been co-produced and is inclusive.
- To assess whether the Prospectus is a cost-effective model for commissioning.

Data has been gathered from a number of sources:

- Semi-structured interviews with 13 stakeholders involved in the development of the CFP and the allocation and management of grants.
- Semi-structured interviews with seven Innovation Fund and Making it Real grant recipients.

- An on-line survey of Innovation Fund applicants - 21 responses (13 successful and eight unsuccessful applicants).
- Analysis of documentation on Community Fund Prospectus applications.

### ***Innovation Fund***

Quantitative data analysis of the impacts and economic and social costs and benefits of the services commissioned through the Innovation Fund. This involves collation and analysis of service performance data, as well as data on service users' engagement with primary care, and emergency and acute health and social care services.

Qualitative research aims to understand the process, impact and benefits of the Innovation Fund Commissioning Model and to draw out lessons to inform future outcomes based commissioning of preventative and community based services. The qualitative research will include all groups of stakeholders in the Innovation Fund.

## **1.4. About this report**

This interim evaluation report provides **emerging findings** based on the data collected and analysed so far. It reviews primarily qualitative data to explore issues associated with the development and implementation of the CFP, and the degree to which these initial findings suggest that the CFP offers a suitable model for the ongoing commissioning of community-based and preventative services. At the time of writing it is too early to assess the full impact of the programme in terms of improved outcomes for service users, as the timescales associated with the setting up of new services mean that robust outcomes data is not yet available for many commissioned services.

A final report and full assessment of the impact of the Fund will be delivered in spring 2015.

The report is divided into the following chapters:

- Chapter 2 discusses the CFP process, and the degree to which it has been open and accessible to voluntary and community groups;
- Chapter 3 provides evidence on what has been funded through the CFP;
- Chapter 4 explores emerging findings to assess the early impact of the CFP;
- Chapter 5 provides conclusions and recommendations.

# The CFP process

# 2

This chapter provides evidence on the CFP process. In particular it assesses the degree to which the process has been inclusive, open and accessible to voluntary and community sector groups in Doncaster.

It is important to note in considering the evidence presented in this chapter that each of the three funding streams has a different process for application and the allocation of grants:

- Seed Fund grants are awarded on a rolling-basis by DMBC Communities Team. The fund is 'marketed' to individuals and community groups via word of mouth, email and social media. Health and Wellbeing officers and other stakeholders (e.g. community safety officers) use local knowledge and contacts to make individuals and groups aware of the funding opportunity. There is no formal application process. Evidence presented in this report covers Seed Fund grants awarded between April and July 2014.
- Making it Real is managed by New Horizons, a third sector infrastructure organisation, on behalf of DMBC. Grants are awarded through funding 'rounds' in which groups are invited to submit applications for funds to develop new activities or support the sustainability of existing activities which meet community need. Decisions on applications are made by an independent panel comprising representatives of the public and voluntary and community sectors. The data presented here relate to a first round of grants in which applications of up to £10,000 were invited over the financial year 2013-14. At the time of data collection, a second round of applications was being considered, and the limit for awards had been reduced to £7,500.
- the Innovation Fund invites applications from voluntary and community sector organisations wishing to deliver services against seven Innovation Fund outcomes. There are two strands of funding: awards under £30,000 and awards over £30,000. Decisions on funding are made by a panel of representatives from commissioning departments and one external representative, against scoring criteria which encompass ability to deliver IF outcomes; innovation; (lack of) replication with existing services, and sustainability. The IF encourages applications for new services, although applicants who can demonstrate innovative developments to existing services are also considered. The data presented in this report relate to the first round of IF grants. At the time of writing a second round of applications is being considered.

## 2.1. Consultation and engagement

Proposals for the CFP emerged from successful consultation with communities and providers conducted around the development of the Borough's prevention strategy. This consultation resulted in a robust framework of co-produced outcomes articulated in a series of 'i-statements' around which the key outcomes of the CFP have been aligned. This is reflected in the consensus expressed by participants in this evaluation (and 16 of the 21 respondents to the survey of Innovation Fund applicants), that the outcomes articulated in the CFP are 'the right ones for Doncaster' (Figure 2).

Although this initial consultation around the prevention strategy was inclusive and successful, some interviewees reported that there had been insufficient engagement of stakeholders around the development of the CFP, and in particular a lack of engagement with the VCS. Interviewees within the local authority were of the view that this resulted in some suspicion amongst VCS stakeholders, particularly in relation to the aims and objectives of the IF, although this is not generally borne out by VCS interviewees spoken to for this research, nor by the responses to the survey of Innovation Fund applicants (see Figure 2). It is also the case that the IF received a high number of applications in the first round (64), indicating that the Fund was generally well received by voluntary and community sector organisations.

It is not clear why wider engagement was not pursued during the development phase, but it is likely that a key constraint was a lack of time to engage extensively and ensure that the CFP was developed and circulated in time to meet budgeting cycle requirements.

DMBC has made efforts to engage potential applicants once the CFP was published. A 'meet the commissioner' event for potential applicants to the Innovation Fund was reportedly 'not well attended', although interviewees spoken to for this research who had attended the event had found it useful. Ten of the 21 respondents to the online survey of Innovation Fund applicants conducted for this research indicated that they had been involved in consultation activities or events prior to making their application (six of these were successful applicants and four were unsuccessful).

New Horizons have responsibility for engagement in relation to the Making it Real fund. Interviewees were positive about their role in promoting the fund and in encouraging potential applicants. One successful applicant remarked:

*New Horizons were important. They came out to see me in the old office before I got these premises. I was trying to keep people positive and NH understood where I was coming from. This was always going to happen but I just needed some kind of support.*

The outsourcing of the MIR fund to a voluntary sector infrastructure organisation can act as a catalyst for improving relationships between the public and voluntary and community sectors in Doncaster, and amongst VCS organisations in the Borough. Historically weak relationships between the local authority and the voluntary and community sector in Doncaster were acknowledged by stakeholders from all sectors interviewed as part of this research:

*The Council's relationship with the VCS hasn't been spectacular to date, and we need to get a lot better.*

One interviewee highlighted the importance of engaging with an organisation with experience of working with the voluntary and community sector:

*If New Horizons have represented the council they have done it well. The model is not important. You have to get the right people. The importance is in the relationship with the funder - they have got to have had experience of working with the sector for a number of years. There is no-one in the council with that experience, simply redeploying someone in the local authority will not do it.*

Although it took time to establish, the MIR fund has received a good number of applications. A recent decision to reduce the funding limit to £7,500 is partly a reflection of need (most of the organisations applying in Round 1 did not have needs that approached the £10,000 limit) and also a strategy to make the resource available to a larger number of local groups.

It has proved more difficult to engage local groups around the Seed Fund. A key issue has been a change in governance of the fund within the local authority, with the result that the Communities Team (which now administers the fund) was not involved until later in the process and it has taken some time to engage with partners and for frontline officers to promote the fund. However, this is improving, and stakeholders suggested that the fund is having a positive impact in improving local communities' perception of DMBC. One commented:

*The biggest positive of the Seed fund is that it provides some money to help the community in ways that we would formerly struggle with. It's raising our reputation that we can be more supportive and helpful.*

## **2.2. Application processes**

Considerable efforts have been made to ensure that application processes for the CFP are transparent and accessible to local groups and organisations.

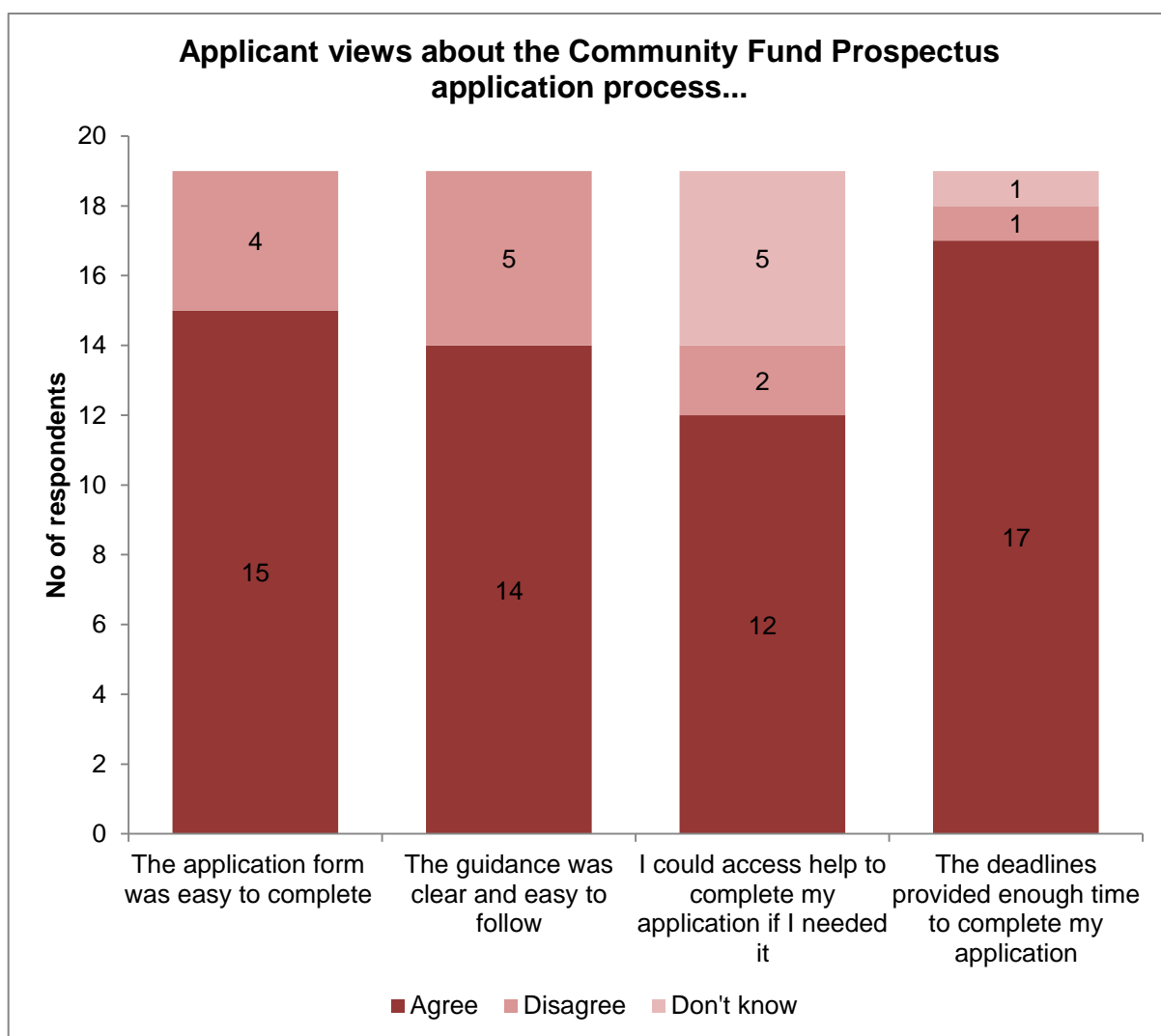
The unrestricted nature of the Seed Fund means that there is no formal application process. The fund is designed to remove barriers and support those at risk of social isolation. This has the advantage of opening up the fund to those that might not access other funding streams, including informal and unconstituted groups which do not want or need to access larger sums of money. However, it can also make it difficult for frontline staff to make judgments around the suitability of applicants, and for communities to understand what the SF can, and cannot, support.

The Making it Real fund offers a two-stage application process in which applicants are offered an organisational 'health check' (designed to ensure that the organisation meets criteria around e.g. constitution and financial probity) followed by support to develop and submit an application to the fund. Strong emphasis is placed on supporting potential applicants, and on guiding applicants through the application process. One interviewee commented on the personalised nature of the support:

*New Horizons were very supportive. They gave us a very clear message that we were the type of club they wanted to support. We ticked all the boxes. It was a very personalised service, they gave us their views on the application and they came to visit us, although I didn't need much help. Being local is important.*

Figure 2.1 provides data on applicants' views in relation to the Community Fund Prospectus application process. It indicates that the majority of respondents had found the application process clear and easy to navigate and had agreed that there was enough time and help available should it be required.

**Figure 2.1: Applicants' views on the Community Fund Prospectus application process**



### 2.3. Decision making and grant allocation

There are similarly different processes in place for making decisions about the awarding of grants through each of the funding streams:

- Seed Fund grants are allocated by the Communities Team, at the discretion of senior managers.
- MIR grants are awarded by an independent panel comprising members of the public and voluntary and community sector.
- IF grants are awarded by a panel comprising representatives of commissioning departments within DMBC, plus one external member. Each application was scored independently by each panel member, and discrepancies discussed until a consensus was reached.

Evidence suggests that these arrangements have largely worked well, and applicants and recipients are of the view that processes have been fair and equitable.

However, there have been some process issues in relation to MIR and the IF which interviewees have highlighted as areas for review in future rounds of the CFP:

- There were some reported issues with the quality of some MIR applications submitted to the panel. This generated requests for amendments or further information from applicants, with the result that more time than was necessary was taken in making funding decisions. Whilst ultimately the decision to submit an application is at the discretion of the applicant organisation there may be scope for ensuring that support workers implement robust checks earlier in the process to ensure that applications are as strong as possible before submission to the panel for consideration. This would minimise frustration and disappointment for applicants and maximise the efficiency of the process.
- There were some issues associated with tight timescales for decision making in relation to the IF. Sixty four applications to the Fund were received for consideration over the Christmas period in 2013. Each of these applications required somewhere between one and two hours to review, causing some difficulties for those involved in the decision making process. All stakeholders interviewed were of the opinion that the outcomes from the process were sound, and that a robust and thorough process had been followed, in which decisions were made against clear criteria. A longer timescale, and the consideration of applications in 'batches' would ease some of the pressures on those involved.

This chapter has outlined evidence in relation to the CFP application process. It has been drawn from interviews with stakeholders and applicants involved in the first round of CFP awards. The evidence suggests that the process has been inclusive, although there was some scope for a greater involvement from the VCS in the development phase of the CFP. Applicants have appreciated the openness and accessibility of the Fund, and there is consensus that there were appropriate timescales and support available to applicants. It would be beneficial in future rounds to build additional time into the process of considering IF applications, and to ensure that MIR applicants get the best response possible by supporting them to submit proposals which clearly meet the criteria for the fund, and which are based on a robust understanding of need.

The next chapter presents evidence on the allocation of resources via the CFP.

## CFP grants

This chapter presents data on what has been funded through the CFP. It draws on data provided by DBMC and New Horizons to outline the awards made through the three streams of the CFP.

### 3.1. What has been funded?

Tables 3.1 to 3.3 outline grants that have been awarded through the three streams of the CFP to date. Information is also provided in relation to unsuccessful applications, where relevant. These data demonstrate that a wide range of activities have been funded across the Borough.

#### *Seed Fund*

At the time of writing, data was available on 15 Seed Fund grants awarded between April and July 2014. This is outlined in Table 3.1. The grants were awarded to 13 different organisations and totalled £9,614.



**Table 3.1: Seed Fund grants**

Applicant	Area	Award £	Description
Friends of Central Children's Centre	Central	1,500	Support to access childcare to enable young parents' participation
Edlington Drug and Alcohol Group	South	268	Purchase of equipment for allotment group
Willows NHW	Central	500	Establishment of new community group
Harvesters Bowling Club	Central	500	Purchase of new equipment
Mexborough Just Do It	South	2,000	Promotion of craft activities and purchase of materials
Community Crafts	North	486	Promotion of activities for young and older people
Quarry Park Walking Group	East	350	Health Walks
How to feed your family	South	270	Venue for cook and eat sessions
Campsall Silver Surfers	North	950	ICT equipment
Norton coffee and chat	North	400	Development of new group, venue and refreshments
IWA Doncaster	Central	250	Domestic violence support - taster session for women from minority ethnic and migrant communities on forced marriage and human trafficking
IWA Doncaster	Central	500	Domestic violence support - taster session for women from minority ethnic and migrant communities on motivational self defence
IWA Doncaster	Central	540	Domestic violence support - taster session for women from minority ethnic and migrant communities on art, confidence building, English language
Hexthorpe United Women's Football	Central	600	Purchase of equipment
Cantley Children's Centre - Young Parents Group	Central	500	Activities for isolated young parents
<b>Total</b>		<b>9,614</b>	

***Making it Real***

At the time of writing, 16 grants had been awarded through the Making it Real fund, with a total value of £101,757. These are detailed in Table 3.2. A further 13 applications were rejected by the panel, and an additional 7 applications received were not considered by the panel as they did not fully meet the eligibility criteria for the fund.

**Table 3.2: Making it Real grants**

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Award £</b>	<b>Description</b>
Clouds Community Counselling	East	5,000	To secure office accommodation
Doncaster Camera Club	Borough- wide	4,162	Purchase of equipment
Charles Martin Martial Arts Academy	Central	7,319	Purchase of equipment, improved safety of participants
Yorkshire Main Community Centre	South	8,413	Improved Community Facilities
Artistic Spectrum	East	5,380	Purchase of equipment
Thorne Colliery Cricket Club	East	6,231	Purchase of equipment for pitch maintenance
Black Cat Community Theatre	Borough- wide	7,526	Purchase of equipment to enable disables members to participate
Moorends Miners Welfare and Community Development Centre	East	9,999	Upgrade of community IT facilities
The Personalisation Forum Group	Central	1,900	Develop and expand self-management programmes
Howbeck Chair Aerobics	South	2,195	Purchase of equipment
Bawtry Cricket Club	South	7,500	Development of all-weather training facility
Stainforth Amateur Boxing Club	East	8,023	Purchase of equipment
Citadel Associates (SY) Ltd	Central	9,970	Garage training facility for older people with disabilities
Rossington Women's Institute	South	2,699	Renew heating system
Highfield's United Groups	North	6,430	Establish a breakfast club
Kool Kayakers	North	9,010	Purchase of equipment and volunteer training
<b>Total</b>		<b>101,757</b>	

***Innovation Fund***

A total of 21 awards have been made through the Innovation Fund, with a collective value of £1,255,801. Table 3.3 summarises awards made under the 7 IF outcomes. There were a number of reasons why the remaining 43 applications were not funded:

- Six were identified by the panel as strong applications, but they had misinterpreted the guidelines by, for instance, identifying more than 1 outcome, or had bid above the maximum.
- Some applications were outside the scope of the CFP – for instance there were a number of applications for salaries for taxi drivers.
- Some were submitted containing incomplete information.
- Some were suggesting things that were replicated elsewhere – thus not meeting IF criterion for avoiding replication.
- A few were poorly written, and it was unclear how they would meet the outcomes.

It is important to note that some of the outcomes in the IF prospectus were over-subscribed and others were undersubscribed. Outcomes that were particularly undersubscribed included outcome 2 - access and transport, and outcome 5 - carers. This meant that some applicants scored better in one of the more competitive outcomes and didn't receive funding, than some of those in the undersubscribed outcome elements (and who did get funding). It is important for DMBC to understand the reasons why some outcomes were under-subscribed. One issue may be misinterpretation of the funding criteria (this was clearly an issue in relation to outcome 2, as outlined above). But another factor is likely to be a lack of knowledge in relation to current provision and gaps within the voluntary and community sector. Closer ongoing collaboration with the VCS via the CFP should help to identify the drivers and barriers to meeting all the CFP outcomes, and based on this enhanced intelligence the council may wish to consider a more strategic approach to meeting need in under-subscribed outcomes. One possible way to approach this is to work collaboratively with selected organisations co-produce responses to areas of outstanding need.

**Table 3.3: Innovation Fund awards**

**Outcome 1 – Information, Advice and Guidance**

**Maximum budget: £60,000**

**Total allocation available: £200,000**

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Award £</b>	<b>Description</b>
SINE FM	Borough-wide	24,224	Local interactive radio station for residents and carers and a platform for care organisations to communicate important information
Edlington Community Organisation	South	55,934	Use of tablets and dongles to provide weekly sessions of tailored support and regular luncheon clubs to people over 50.
Rural Action Yorkshire	Borough-wide	60,000	Introduce an app to urban and rural settings to enhance the regularity of contact between isolated members of the community and the community agent
DIAL Doncaster	Borough-wide	59,999	Specialist advice and support service and use of an interactive self-help kiosk for disabled people / carers.
<b>Total</b>		<b>200,157.00</b>	

## Outcome 2 – Access and Transport

Maximum budget: £100,000

Total allocation available: £300,000

Applicant	Area	Award £	Description
CSV	Borough-wide	99,617	Volunteer mentoring and driving scheme to tackle isolation for people aged over 50
<b>Total</b>		<b>99,617.00</b>	

## Outcome 3 – Social Isolation

Maximum budget: £60,000

Total allocation available: £300,000

Applicant	Area	Award £	Description
Purple Patch Arts	Borough-wide	29,780	Two arts education activity programmes for adults with learning disabilities (15 places per programme)
South Yorkshire Centre for Inclusive Living (SYCIL)	Borough-wide	58,957	One-to-one and group activities and wider community engagement to reduce social isolation and loneliness of older people, people with long-term conditions and people with declining mental health
Artful	Borough-wide	29,023	Six activities – planting seeds, recycled growing structures and wind chimes, memory trees, CPD and celebration event to use creativity as a way of tackling social isolation.
Citadel Associates (South Yorkshire) Ltd	Borough-wide	30,000	Community garage for isolated disabled people, ex-offenders and substance users to build employment skills, confidence, good mental health and personal development.
Sue Ryder	Borough-wide	59,824	Establish up to three Community Café's in key locations in response to the consultation currently being undertaken.
People Focussed Group (formerly Personalisation Forum Group)	Borough-wide	60,000	Peer support groups in health centres, children's centres and libraries to promote wellness with all members of the community.
Braithwell and Micklebring Recreation and Leisure Association	South	29,300	Volunteer Coordinator to recruit additional volunteers to deliver a range of activities including dancing, cinema club, keep fit and community choir etc. for isolated and lonely people and carers.
<b>Total</b>		<b>296,884.00</b>	

#### Outcome 4 – Early Intervention and Prevention

Maximum budget: £100,000

Total allocation available: £300,000

Applicant	Area	Award £	Description
South Yorkshire Housing Association	Doncaster North	99,594	Social prescribing and housing support service.
Relate	Borough-wide	95,550	Relationship counselling interventions for people living with dementia and their carers.
Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust	Borough-wide	29,030	Pilot scheme testing the concept of diverting people with mental health needs to appropriate treatment and away from police custody and detention.
Doncaster CVS	Central	94,742	Social prescribing for adults with one or more long-term conditions.
<b>Total</b>		<b>318,916.00</b>	

#### Outcome 5 – Carers

Maximum budget: £50,000

Total allocation available: £200,000

Applicant	Area	Award £	Description
Doncaster Alcohol Services	Borough-wide	47,676	Therapeutic service for carers of people with alcohol related problems
DARTS	Borough-wide	49,957	A 24 month programme developing carers' emotional resilience by maintaining their physical and mental wellbeing.
<b>Total</b>		<b>97,633.00</b>	

#### Outcome 6 – Health and Wellbeing

Maximum budget: £60,000

Total allocation available: £200,000

Applicant	Area	Award	Description
The Conservation Volunteers (RDASH)	Borough-wide	29,900	Year-round activities aimed at reducing social isolation and improving general mental wellbeing, physical fitness and support for those wanting to be healthier or tackle substance misuse.
The Cascade Foundation	Borough-wide	59,600	Funding to expand and gain accreditation for PSD and Learning Coach training
The Cyrenians (operating as Changing Lives)	Borough-wide	51,337	Support to women who are involved in street sex work, who present with multiple and complex needs including a substance misuse problem.
<b>Total</b>		<b>140,837</b>	

This data demonstrates that to date the CFP has supported 55 organisations in the Borough, and awarded a total of £1,367,172 to projects which aim to meet community need. Resources have been allocated widely across the Borough.

A key aim of the Prospectus is to provide a mechanism for developing local capacity to respond to local need. There are a number of ways in which this might be achieved through the CFP:

- by providing resources to support new projects or interventions;
- by funding new providers (in particular those that have not previously been in receipt of local authority grants or contracts);
- by supporting the development or expansion of existing groups or services that are meeting the needs of vulnerable populations;
- by supporting new or emerging groups that have the potential to build capacity to meet local need.

The Prospectus has provided a mechanism to support groups that have not previously accessed local authority funding, and for supporting new projects and interventions. For instance, seven of the 21 respondents to the Innovation Fund applicants' survey had not previously been funded by DMBC. A further eleven groups had been funded by the local authority for a different project or service, and one had been funded for the same project or service. The flexibility of the Prospectus was seen to be particularly important in opening up opportunities to involve groups that had not previously been in receipt of local authority grants or contracts. Furthermore, stakeholders were of the view that it is likely that some of the awards made under the CFP (e.g. creative arts projects) would not have been commissioned under previous arrangements. Thus the CFP is providing a mechanism to broaden the focus of adults and communities interventions to ensure 'upstream' investment in projects which support prevention and increased capacity:

*Overall it has been a fantastic opportunity and I am grateful to the council for that. We were a bit of a gamble but this is a big opportunity for us and I am really hoping that we can deliver on that.*

The Making it Real fund has provided an opportunity for groups that might not meet more stringent criteria associated with other funding streams. This is particularly important for new groups, which might not have the track record or reserves to qualify for other funds. One recipient remarked:

*We have no previous experience of funding from the council. It has always been difficult for small organisations and new organisations. The flexibility of the fund and the fact that those barriers had been withdrawn was an important factor.*

It has also proved a popular mechanism for providing important resources to build the capacity of a wide range of established local groups. These organisations, which make up the bulk of the voluntary and community sector, are a key contribution to building independent and resilient communities. The 'local' nature of the fund has been particularly appreciated by VCS organisations. The resources given to these organisations can make a substantial difference to local communities, and all the recipients interviewed for this research were very positive about the impact that the fund had made on their organisations. The majority of these grants have provided for new or improved equipment and resources, ensuring that the recipient organisations are able to continue to provide support and activities into the future.

The SEED fund, which has provided relatively small amounts to groups, with no formal application process, has been an important mechanism for supporting groups that are small or unconstituted, and which might not have the capacity or need to take on substantial additional resources. However, there is evidence that it is not always clear to stakeholders or applicants what the Seed Fund is intended to achieve. A range of aims were articulated by interviewees including 'support for isolated individuals', 'starting up new groups', 'helping groups to develop MIR applications' and 'bringing people together who have something in common'. It is valid for the Seed Fund to support all of these activities but there is a lack of overall understanding in relation to how these activities contribute to the overall objectives of the CFP. This may be particularly true amongst front-line officers who are charged with identifying potential Seed Fund recipients but who are also less likely to be engaged in discussions around the strategic objectives of the Fund.

There are a small number of relatively substantial awards made via the Seed Fund (£1000 plus). The lack of formal assessment and sustainability criteria associated with this funding stream suggests that consideration should be given to a maximum cap of £1000, and that applications exceeding this should be considered through MIR. Whilst it is not always appropriate for small groups to constitute there is well documented evidence that small groups can be at risk when in receipt of what are (for them) unusually large sums of money. The extra checks and support available via MIR would provide these recipients with additional assurances in relation to their capacity to manage these resources.

This chapter has outlined the resources that have been allocated through the three streams of the CFP. It has suggested that the Prospectus has provided an opportunity to develop groups and services that have not previously been supported by the local authority.

The next chapter discusses early evidence in relation to the impact of the CFP.

## The impact of CFP

This chapter looks at early evidence in relation to the impact of the CFP. It draws on interviews with stakeholders and fund recipients to assess the degree to which the Prospectus has supported increased capacity within local communities. This interim report does not contain data on outcomes for the beneficiaries of organisations funded through the CFP. DMBC is in the process of negotiating with MIR and IF providers to collect this data via bespoke workbooks, designed to capture evidence on improved outcomes for vulnerable populations. It is worth noting that in interviews representatives of recipient organisations provided comment on early drafts of these workbooks. Key concerns were that some outcomes were not relevant to some organisations (for instance those supporting offenders) and that the workbooks required considerable time and resource to complete. This is an issue in particular for new and community-based organisations which may not have the systems and processes in place to capture the data required. The final report of this evaluation will report on outcomes data available at the time of writing.

There is clear evidence that the Prospectus is impacting positively on capacity within funded organisations. Those that have had funds through MIR and IF provided examples of impact:

*The impact on the club has been immense..... we have no worries now for a number of years.*

*One impact already is that there has been an increase in volunteering. We always felt that we struggled to get people involved but now the drop-in is open and there is a presence at the centre we have people coming in to offer to help.*

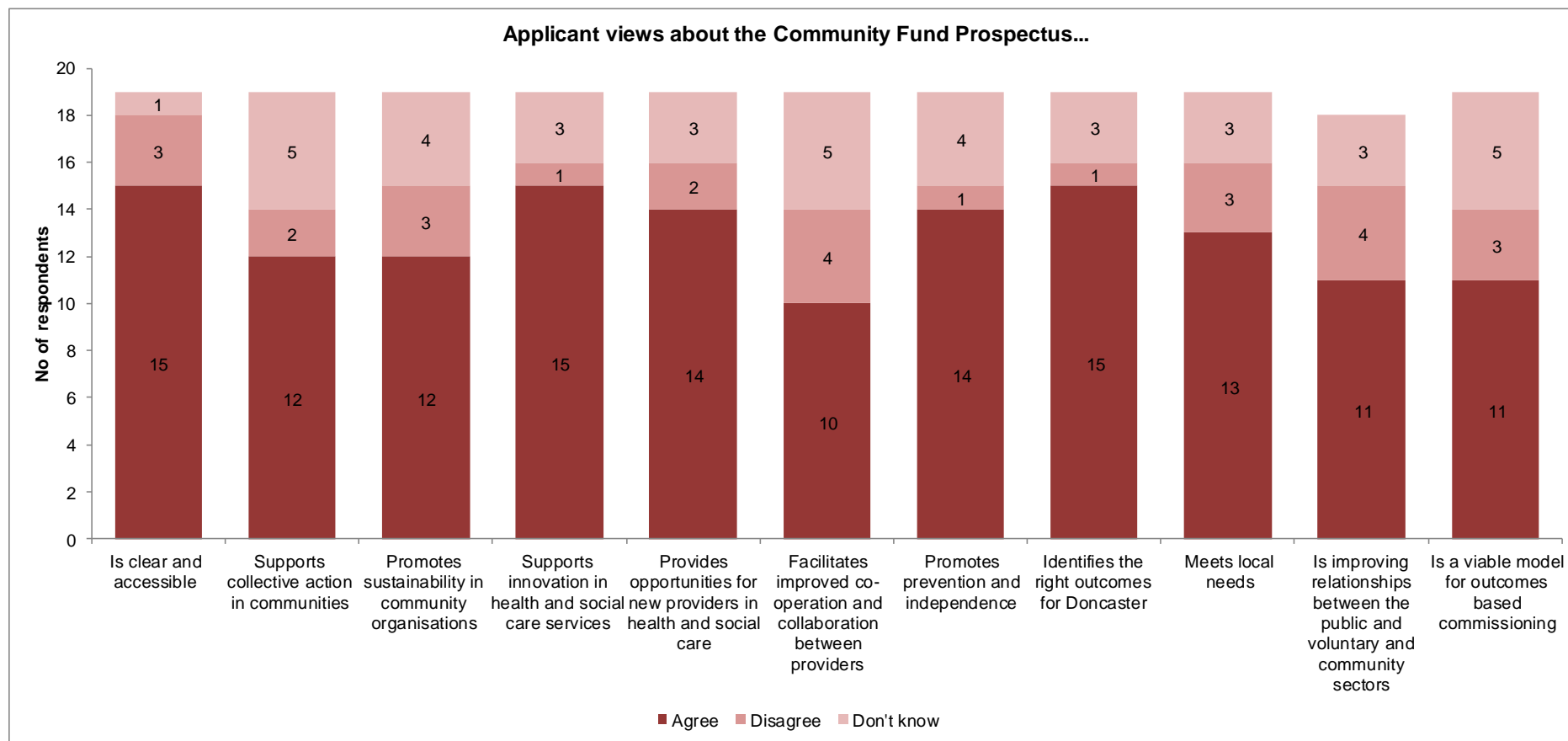
*We will hit our targets. We had an expectation of supporting 10 people in our first year and that will be exceeded. 3 people have gone into work already.*

At the time of reporting it has not yet been possible to interview recipients of the Seed Fund. Evidence from this group of fund recipients will be reflected in the final evaluation report. However, those involved in the allocation of the fund identified examples of small groups that have been supported to develop social and community activities. These included paying taxi fares for a group of vulnerable older people, enabling them to participate in social activities, and support to develop a walking group designed to improve men's well-being and mental health outcomes. The group has now become self-sufficient.

Figure 4.2 provides evidence on IF applicants' views in relation to the impact of the CFP. It demonstrates that the majority of respondents to this survey agree that the CFP is impacting positively on a range of outcomes, including collective action and sustainability.



**Figure 4.2: IF Applicants views about the Community Fund Prospectus**



The CFP is promoting stronger connections between community groups. For example, an event which brought together successful applicants was seen by stakeholders to have provided an opportunity for VCS organisations to discuss ideas, learn about other services and explore options for making services more sustainable. This is an important step in supporting increased capacity within the VCS, and one which the CFP has the potential to capitalise on in the future. Eleven respondents to the survey of Innovation Fund applicants agreed that the IF facilitates improved co-operation and collaboration between providers in the health and social care sector.

The Prospectus has also improved the VCS' perception in relation to the local authority, contributing to improved relationships between the local authority and the voluntary and community sectors. Although it is recognised that there is room for improvements, the CFP is widely acknowledged by stakeholders and VCS organisations as a 'step in the right direction'. Twelve respondents to the survey of Innovation Fund applicants agreed that the IF is improving relationships between the public and voluntary and community sectors. One MIR grant recipient remarked:

*There was no relationship between the voluntary sector and the council before so any improvement in that is good. I appreciated fact that it (the CFP) was local - connected to Doncaster council ..... We have never had anything from the council before - no recognition, no visits, no funding, even though we have been doing it a long time. They need to recognise the importance of volunteers and need to fund locally. It makes you feel wanted, feel that you are not on your own fighting a battle.*

These improving relationships are a strong foundation for future collaboration between the public and voluntary and community sectors in the Borough, and there is reason to assume that the positive impacts of the CFP in this respect will continue to develop in the future.

There are questions in relation to the sustainability of investments through the CFP. Whilst efforts have been made to ensure sustainability, at least through MIR and IF, it is important to note that the organic nature of the voluntary and community sector, and the fact that the sustainability of VCS organisations can sometimes be influenced by factors beyond their control, means that it is not always feasible or desirable for smaller and community-based groups to be sustainable in the long term. Nevertheless, the ability of groups to demonstrate sufficient resilience to survive in the medium term (two to three years) is an important consideration in the allocation of resources. Stakeholders involved in IF noted that applicants generally scored low in relation to sustainability criteria. It is important that where appropriate MIR and IF recipients are supported to develop plans for the sustainability of their organisation and/or service. Depending on the nature of the service this might include exploring options for other grant funding, charging for services, or alternative forms of social investment (such as loans or investment bonds). Helping recipients to gather robust evidence on outcomes for beneficiaries is an important aspect of this work.

Several stakeholders articulated a rationale for the CFP which promoted the development of emergent capacity and networks through the Seed Fund, leading to the development of sustainability in more developed groups through MIR which then enabled them to deliver bigger projects funded through the IF. There is inherent in this rationale an assumption that all three funds are linked, and that there is route of 'progression', from the Seed Fund to MIR, and from MIR to the IF. As one stakeholder commented in relation to the latter:

*Smart applicants have used MIR to put foundations in place and then gone for IF.*

There is very little evidence that this rationale is being realised currently. It may simply be that it is too soon at the time of writing for groups to have moved between funds. However, caution should be applied in assuming that this will be realised to any significant extent. The nature of the VCS is that the bulk of activity takes place at a level below that required for the delivery of contracts through the IF. The Seed Fund has supported a number of small existing community groups, many of which will continue to provide local activities on an informal basis. It has proved harder to identify or establish new networks which might then lead to the establishment of a constituted group. Similarly, it may not be appropriate for all groups funded through MIR to build capacity to undertake contract delivery. The majority of MIR funded organisations are community and sports based organisations which are unlikely to need, or want, to expand their remit to apply for IF resources and care needs to be taken to ensure that the CFP does not promote the 'artificial' expansion of groups with associated risks to sustainability.

There may be some organisations that will benefit from support through multiple CFP streams but there are some barriers which need to be addressed to facilitate progression between the three funds. A key issue is lack of shared understanding or strategic co-ordination between the three funds. This has the effect of limiting the degree to which stakeholders, or applicants, can maximise opportunities to develop sustainable projects. The case of one applying organisation is illustrative:

*When I looked at the prospectus in my own head I thought we would go for MIR then IF. The plan was to go for MIR to bid to develop the strategy to develop the centre. We would then apply to IF to deliver the services. I put in a MIR bid in October. It took ages to get a decision and I was still chasing the bid in January. New Horizons kept asking for more information - most of which I thought I had already given them and I really felt as if I was having to chase the money. By January I had already put in an Innovation Fund bid and was then informed in late Feb that I could not have the MIR money because we had the IF grant. The MIR grant was supposed to set us up to deliver the Innovation Fund. Our intention was that the post funded through IF would deliver against the business plan, not write it. So we have had to alter the project slightly from what we originally envisaged.*

Clearly, the ability of organisations to access multiple strands of CFP funding needs to be balanced against considerations of equity in terms of access and the allocation of resources across other organisations. However, this case illustrates the need for a better shared understanding both amongst stakeholders and applicants in relation to the processes and objectives of the three funds. Decision making 'in isolation' had the effect in this instance of impacting negatively on the proposals submitted by this organisation, with the possible outcome of reduced impact in relation to positive outcomes for vulnerable individuals.

This chapter has reviewed early evidence on the impact of the CFP. It has indicated that further evidence is needed to establish the impact of the Prospectus on improved outcomes for vulnerable individuals but that there have been positive impacts on the capacity of groups and organisations and within the voluntary and community sector as a whole. The Prospectus has also acted as a catalyst for improving relationships between DBMC and the voluntary and community sector in the Borough.

The final chapter of this report presents conclusions and recommendations.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

This report has provided interim findings from the independent evaluation of the Doncaster Community Fund Prospectus. This final chapter summarises conclusions and recommendations for DMBC.

The CFP is a new and innovative approach to supporting community capacity and prevention in Doncaster. It has piloted a method of engaging with the voluntary and *community sector in the Borough to take a collaborative approach to developing services to meet local need*. The CFP is a bold step for the local authority, and its successful implementation involves cultural change within the authority and in its relationships with partner organisations. It also requires the voluntary and community sector to adapt to a new way of working with the local authority, and with other public sector commissioning organisations. It is inevitable that these cultural changes will take some time to bed in, and within this context the findings outlined in this report reflect the challenges inherent in developing this new approach, as well as the successes achieved so far. The conclusions and recommendations are intended to build on this early experience to inform the CFP going forward.

Conclusions are considered within the context of the objectives of the evaluation:

- To assess the degree to which the Community Funding Prospectus has been a catalyst for innovative and effective responses to prevention and local priority needs.
- To assess the degree to which the Prospectus has been co-produced and is inclusive.
- To assess whether the Prospectus is a cost-effective model for commissioning.

The evidence outlined in this report suggests that the CFP has acted as a catalyst for a new approach to prevention and community need. The Prospectus is of itself innovative and has enabled the funding of new groups and services which would not have been supported under previous grant funding and commissioning regimes. The projects funded under the Innovation Fund outcomes are exploring new ways of meeting the needs of vulnerable groups, and some of them (for instance social prescribing) are developing new models of service delivery across the Borough. It is difficult to assess the degree to which these projects are 'innovative' and one issue noted in the course of this research is that there is no consensus, either within DMBC, or between DMBC and its partners in relation to what constitutes innovation in service delivery. A number of stakeholders interviewed remarked that IF applications were not as innovative as they had hoped. Ongoing engagement with the VCS could be used to explore barriers to innovation (particularly in the context of

under subscribed IF outcomes) and to develop consensus around opportunities for developing innovative future responses. This conversation might also address options for a more targeted approach to commissioning services where there is not current capacity to meet need.

As outlined above, additional data is required in order to establish the 'effectiveness' of the CFP in improving outcomes for vulnerable people. There is no reason to assume that these outcomes will not be achieved and on the basis of evidence provided thus far by recipient organisations positive impacts in terms of building local capacity and strengthening local organisations are already apparent. However, there are concerns in relation to IF outcomes which are under subscribed, and a need to consider options for ensuring that these outcomes are met. The final evaluation report, due in 2015, will utilise project-level data to quantify outcomes from the Prospectus. This data will be an important element of considerations in relation to the sustainability of services, and decisions about re-, and de-, commissioning services as the Prospectus moves forward and becomes embedded as a model for future commissioning.

The CFP is informed by recognition within DMBC that moving forward, public and voluntary and community sector partners need to work together effectively to respond to the dual challenges of increasing demand and decreasing resources. The co-production of services is a key mechanism for responding to these challenges and for ensuring that local services meet the needs of vulnerable populations. Collaboration between the VCS and the public sector can identify how services can be better aligned, duplication reduced, and gaps identified. It can also identify opportunities for leveraging in resources to fill gaps in need.

There is scope to improve the degree to which the CFP is co-produced. Evidence outlined earlier in this report suggests that there was limited engagement with the VCS at the development stage. This had a number of implications which have emerged through the evaluation:

- There was, initially at least, a lack of shared understanding about the overall aims of the CFP - stakeholders reported that there was some suspicion amongst some VCS organisations about the Prospectus.
- Organisations were expecting that we had a specification in mind, but weren't telling them what that was. It took some convincing that we wanted organisations to show innovative ways to meet the outcomes.
- There was a missed opportunity to maximise the quality of applications by engaging effectively with VCS providers to explore how their projects could best respond to the outcomes specified in the Prospectus – applicants interviewed for this evaluation had sometimes experienced confusion over where best to target their proposal.
- There was insufficient shared understanding about the nature and extent of capacity, and gaps in local provision, reflected in the uneven distribution of applications against different Innovation Fund outcomes.

An open, and ongoing, dialogue between the VCS and the voluntary and community sector is vital in ensuring that these issues are addressed. The findings of this evaluation are an important aspect of this dialogue, and sharing these findings with the voluntary and community sector could provide a focus for engagement. The CFP has overall been very well received by the voluntary and community sector in Doncaster, and the local authority can use this good will as a platform for developing a stronger relationship with the VCS.

The cost-effectiveness of the programme will be determined by the outcomes achieved. At this stage it is possible to comment on the efficiency of the approach as a mechanism for supporting and commissioning local groups to meet local need. As a new approach, it could be anticipated that the CFP would encounter some early problems in implementation. The evidence outlined above suggests that there have been some inefficiencies and inconsistencies in decision making processes which have meant that the process was not as streamlined as it could be, and this has resulted in increased 'opportunity costs' in terms of officer and volunteer time. It has also been the case that the CFP has required more time than anticipated from commissioning officers who have needed to develop new protocols for working with voluntary and community sector providers which are less experienced in working with public sector commissioners in this way. It can be anticipated, that as the CFP progresses, some of these early issues will be ironed out and the efficiency of the process will improve.

## **5.1. Recommendations**

The interim findings lead to a number of recommendations, which are presented under four headings: process and implementation; building strong relationships; developing the CFP model.

### ***Process and implementation***

The CFP represents a robust process which has in the main been well implemented. Recommendations under this heading relate to improving the efficiency of decision making, and reviewing the connectivity between the three strands of the Fund.

- The CFP steering group should consider ways in which decision making processes can be improved across the CFP: reviewing timescales (particularly in relation to the IF); working with New Horizons to ensure that there is efficient process which offers the best support to MIR applicants; and ensuring that there is shared understanding amongst those responsible for allocation of the Seed Fund in relation to how best to allocate the resource to meet local need.
- The CFP steering group should consider options for developing stronger connections between the three funding streams through, for instance, bringing together those involved in decision making in the various funds to discuss challenges and opportunities associated with implementing the CFP. There may be particular benefits to providing opportunity for panel members involved in MIR and IF to share experience and learning.

### ***Building strong relationships***

There is clear evidence that the CFP has acted as a catalyst for improved relationships between the voluntary and community sector and DMBC and its partners. Some minor early implementation issues notwithstanding, the CFP has been well received by the VCS and is generally seen as a 'step in the right direction'. Recommendations under this heading advocate using the CFP as a platform for ongoing dialogue across the sectors and which continues to build strong relationships and which supports the continued co-production of the CFP.

- DMBC should share the key findings of this report widely with the VCS in Doncaster.
- Consideration should be given to the establishment of a regular forum for review of the CFP, involving a range of stakeholders across the public and voluntary and community sectors. Key issues that the forum might address include developing consensus around innovation, ways in which current gaps in

provision can be addressed, and the opportunities and challenges for VCS organisations responding to the Prospectus.

- It is recommended that the VCS is consulted (perhaps through the relevant infrastructure support organisations) in relation to the format, and scope, of this forum.

### ***Developing the CFP model***

As outlined above, the CFP is an innovative and new approach to supporting community and preventative services in Doncaster. A future challenge is moving from an essentially 'pilot' programme to one which is embedded as a model which supports the ongoing development of community capacity and which provides sustainable solutions to community need. Recommendations under this heading relate to ensuring that the CFP model continues to be developed on the basis of robust evidence to support commissioning and decommissioning decisions, and reviewing aspects of the Fund to ensure that it is a practical, and flexible, framework.

- Within the context of best practice in commissioning and procurement, and in consultation with all stakeholders, DMBC should consider options for a more strategic and targeted approach to commissioning services under IF outcomes which are not currently being met. This might involve working more directly with certain providers to co-produce responses to unmet need.
- The CFP steering group should review the terms of the Seed Fund. In particular there is a need to consider the benefits and challenges associated with a clearer criterion for awards, and the pros and cons of limiting risk by placing an upper limit on awards that can be made through the Fund, particularly to unconstituted groups.
- DMBC should work with funded groups and organisations to ensure that robust, and relevant, outcomes data is available which can be used to establish the impact of the CFP. It is important that this data is proportionate, and that it reflects the outcomes of the activity funded. These are likely to include increased community engagement and capacity, as well as improved outcomes for isolated individuals.
- Demonstration of the value for money of the CFP necessitates the collection of robust data on costs, outputs and outcomes. DMBC should also consider the possibilities of capturing data on the wider 'value' of the CFP by demonstrating, for instance, increased numbers of volunteers associated with the groups and services supported by the Fund, and increased resources levered in as a result of CFP funds (including grants and personal budgets).
- There is a need to engage stakeholders, including the VCS, in discussion around the sustainability of groups and services funded through the CFP. This should include consideration of the basis on which decisions about continued funding (or not) are made, and working with the VCS to explore realistic options for alternative sources of support within the context of constrained public sector resources. These will vary for different organisations and services but might include self-fundraising, charging for services, other grants and other vehicles such as loans, social investments and social enterprise.

# Sheffield Hallam University

*Evaluation of the Doncaster community fund prospectus: final report*

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