

# Living Well Sefton Community Resilience Grants Programme 2016-2019

## Impact Report



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## Foreword by Matt Ashton, Director of Public Health, Sefton MBC

Since 2016 Living Well Sefton services have been supporting local ideas and innovation through the Community Resilience Grants Programme.

Almost 100 grants have already been allocated, and they continue to help local people get grassroots ideas and initiatives off the ground quickly without complicated and onerous processes.

Joint working between the Council and voluntary, community and faith (VCF) sector has enabled us to support new groups and individuals to apply for start-up funding to see their vision and ideas support innovation and change in their local communities. Funding and support for a range of community programmes and the creation of new groups include funding for summer holiday meals for low-income families, creation of buddy networks to decrease social isolation and increase physical activity for older men as well as support for armed forces veterans and for people feeling lonely and isolated. These groups have all made a real difference locally, with the added impact of reducing demands on local GPs, helping people to get out of debt, be less isolated and lonely and improve their physical and mental wellbeing.

The grants programme also builds on Making Every Contact Count (MECC) training and provides opportunities for grant recipients to train as MECC ambassadors, building community capacity by providing relevant advice and information, making sure that every community contact does count and that it is as meaningful as possible.

As the Council and its partners in the VCF sector continue to work together to build on the success of this inspiring programme, we feel confident that our joint approach of listening, enabling and continuous learning, ensures local people have access to resources and support to make their ideas and innovations happen, and enable us to continue to work together to maintain positive resilient and confident communities.



## Foreword by Angela White, Chief Executive, Sefton CVS

Over the last three years, the Living Well Sefton Community Resilience Grants Programme has made more than 91 awards to 86 VCF sector groups to undertake health and wellbeing interventions in our local communities.

Through case studies, this report illustrates the impact of grant investment as a vital catalyst in stimulating and growing social action responses locally. It also demonstrates that a small grants programme complementing commissioning and larger-scale investment has a tremendous value in developing high-impact, low-cost responses.

The grants have enabled grassroots groups and new start-ups to test new approaches and generate innovative solutions to tackle long-term problems in our communities. The partnership between Sefton Council, Sefton CVS and the wider VCF sector is adopting a progressive solution-focused approach in supporting and enabling personal and community resilience and promoting the benefits of health and wellbeing in its widest context.

Sefton Council's Public Health Commissioners have agreed to continue their investment in an expanded voluntary sector-led collaborative for a further three years which will enable us to continue this grants programme, developing new services with local communities and local people at the heart.



## Background

Sefton CVS administered an innovative programme of Community Resilience Grants, as part of the wider Living Well Sefton programme commissioned by Public Health.

Small grant applications of up to £2,500 per organisation were invited from community groups, residents' groups, voluntary organisations, faith groups and social enterprises working in Sefton. Further grants were available for individuals with a great idea to improve health and wellbeing at a very local level, to apply for up to £500, with the support of a Living Well Sefton partner organisation.

The grants supported the aim of Living Well Sefton to reduce health and social inequalities and improve the health and wellbeing outcomes of people in our most deprived communities and delivering strategic goals of:

- Addressing inequality by improving the health of the poorest fastest.
- Increasing resilience at individual, household and community levels.
- Contributing to supporting people to stay well and live independently for longer, without reliance on additional support such as social care and the NHS.
- Being innovative or creative to address a specific problem or need.
- Working in partnership with others to avoid duplication and maximise impact.
- Contributing to achieving Sefton Borough Council's 2030 Vision.

Extensive community engagement and awareness-raising activities were carried out and a simple, yet effective form was used to enable wide participation. The grants panel for each round was comprised of different representatives from Living Well Sefton partners, supported by the programme management team.

The simple application process attracted groups who may not have the capacity to apply for larger grant funds. This allowed Sefton CVS to build relationships with both successful and unsuccessful applicants, supporting the groups and the wider sector, through a programme of actions, to be more sustainable.

The process also allowed for the programme management team to identify opportunities for Living Well Sefton partners to work collaboratively with groups to deliver wellbeing activities. For example Active Sefton offered to provide free sessions to groups who would otherwise have paid outside providers, allowing the project to go ahead without grant funding. Brighter Living Partnership supported healthy cooking sessions at Southport Food Pantry, a partnership that may not have happened were it not for the grants programme.

More than £136,000 was awarded over five rounds from November 2016 to December 2018 to organisations and individuals across Sefton, from small constituted groups targeting very specific areas and issues, to large charities working across a much bigger patch.

Three of the grant rounds were themed to meet specific priorities such as social isolation and improving mental health, while round three was designated as a 'partnerships' round aiming to encourage joint working and new partnership approaches within Sefton.



Living Well Sefton Programme Manager, Karen Nolan, presenting a cheque to Dave Smith from Veterans in Sefton.

## Round 1

Launched in **November 2016** -  
**39** applications were received and  
**£35,217** was distributed to **20** groups.

39

**Case Study: The Orrell Trust, St John and St James Church and Community Centre, Bootle**  
**Soup in a Basket received £2,500**



The Orrell Trust had previously run an infrequent but very popular luncheon club that was often oversubscribed.

Participants pre-booked their place to help with planning, however this prevented new 'guests' from joining the club. Funding limitations prevented Orrell Trust from hosting more frequent lunches. The aim of the new project was to increase provision by offering a drop-in style café once a month. Consultation with local residents and users of the centre identified a lunch club as a need for the local community. The Community Resilience Grant funding enabled the project to run for an initial 12 months.

The project proposed to improve the lives of local people by improving their mental wellbeing through the development of new friendships, reducing social isolation and loneliness, and providing a healthy lunch at cost price. Increasing the client base by offering a drop-in service and providing regular contact with the Development Officer led to increased support and signposting opportunities, and increased opportunities for volunteers from the community. This new, more informal provision widened the opportunity to access the group and provided a more regular meeting place.

Two years on, the project is still running and has become self sustaining, with an average of 18 people attending each month. Participants have a healthy homemade soup and a sandwich for lunch, and have the opportunity to meet new people and feel more connected to others. Of the participants surveyed, 86 per cent said that they had made new friends and 90 per cent said they felt happier since attending the Soup in a Basket sessions.

## Round 2

Launched in **June 2017** -  
**32** applications were received and  
**£17,280** was distributed to **11** groups.

32

**Case Study: Mobile Craft 4U received £1,512**



Using crafting to support participants' mental wellbeing, this project aimed to deliver a positive impact on the emotional wellbeing of those affected by physical or mental ill health, socially isolated people and carers.

Mobile Craft 4U ran two six-week workshops for 32 people, with carefully planned sessions enabling participants to achieve beautiful results quickly. Sessions were tailored to individual ability and included all necessary materials. Participants were also given ideas to use their newly-learned skills outside of the sessions enabling them to continue to benefit outside of the workshops and after the programme had ended.

People's wellbeing improved as they made new friends by creating something together which helped people communicate feelings not easily put into words. Crafting enabled people to talk without having to make eye contact which facilitated 'opening up'. The therapeutic effects were evident in course evaluations and people reported a reduction in stress levels, fear and anxiety, reduced feelings of loneliness and depression along with other benefits.

**"After a cancer diagnosis, it is wonderful to be so absorbed in an activity that pushes any worries out of my mind."** Participant

**"Going to the weekly workshops I have found that I am more confident. I can now talk easily to other people. This group is a weekly therapy for me - it is the best thing I have done for my wellbeing. I want to thank the people so much."** Participant

**"It is very important to get washed and dressed and leave the house. Two whole hours with nothing to worry about!"** Participant

## Round 3

Launched in **November 2017** - **18** joint applications received and **£25,495** was distributed to **7** projects.

18

**Case Study: Age Concern Crosby/Plaza Community Cinema received £1,800 for Flicks and Friends**



Age Concern Crosby operates in Church Ward, which has high levels of deprivation and a high percentage of older people.

In partnership with the Plaza Community Cinema, Age Concern applied for a grant to run a film club to provide one film showing per month for a planned minimum of 20 older people. Many of the service users in the area live alone, and this was another opportunity to get together with friends, alleviating isolation and improving wellbeing. As part of the application process, Living Well Sefton requested that the opportunity be widened to the whole community rather than limiting participation to older people. A minimal donation of £1 was requested to cover the cost of refreshments, offering low-cost access to the cinema, which is often out of reach to people on a low income, with the added benefit of social contact with other community members.

The success of the showings far surpassed the original figure of 20 attendees, and over 280 people attended the April 2019 showing which has also made the programme 'self sustaining'. The programme has attracted lots of social media attention and press coverage which has contributed to its success, and ensures that the showings are available to members of the wider community as well as clients of Age Concern.

**"The film was fabulous and the whole concept of Flicks and Friends is wonderful. Well done and thank you to all the volunteers who make events like this possible."** Participant

## Round 4

Launched in **March 2018** - **34** applications received and **£26,135** was distributed to **14** projects.

34

**Case Study: Collective Encounters working with Stepping Stones received £2,250 for Stepping into Drama**



Collective Encounters, a theatre for social change based in Liverpool, worked with members of Stepping Stones Southport to introduce drama and other creative disciplines to the group.

The aim was to creatively explore issues and develop exciting ways to communicate members' thoughts and ideas in a performance.

The expected benefits of the project were to build confidence, enable people to have fun and connect and promote wellbeing and positive mental health, in response to consultation that had taken place with those accessing the Stepping Stone services. This consultation identified that people would like to develop their personal confidence and communication skills in order to raise awareness about issues that affect them. They wanted people in the wider community to think about mental health and learning differences and positively challenge some of the myths and prejudices they encountered on a day-to-day basis. The project was in workshop format over 10 weeks, culminating in a performance for an invited audience of family members, local community groups, councillors and health and support workers.

**10** small organisations funded more than once



Direct benefits reported by participants were reduced feelings of isolation and increased confidence levels, as well as raised awareness of mental health and learning differences amongst the local community, reported by those attending the final performance.

**“Everyone loved the weekly groups. It is the best thing we’ve done. The group felt closer and empowered to do more. We are looking for more funding now to do more things like this.”**  
Michael Swift - Chair of Stepping Stones

**“The show was so uplifting and inspiring. It seemed effortless and everyone was overflowing with enthusiasm!”** Audience member

**“After a little initial resistance, the group fully engaged and came to lead the process. The strength of the final performance is a testament to the confidence they developed and the views they expressed. It was a wonderful group to be a part of!”** Abi Horsfield - Other Theatres Director

**11**

projects to support people to **increase physical activity**



**26**

individuals funded and supported to deliver **neighbourhood level projects**



## Round 5

Launched in **November 2018** - **32** applications received and **£17,458** was distributed to **13** projects.

**32**

### Case Study: Sefton OPERA received £900 for social tea dances



Sefton OPERA sought funding for room hire costs to continue their successful social tea dances.

Two per month are held, one in the north of the borough at The Atkinson and one in the south of the borough at Bootle Cricket Club. The venues are accessible with good connections to public transport. The tea dances continue to flourish as a place to make new friends whilst enjoying the company of old friends. The number of attendees continues to grow and there are guest appearances by a wide range of local singers. Dancing is a great form of exercise, and seen by people as a fun activity rather than as a chore. The links between loneliness and poor health are well established. The social tea dances addressed both the physical and mental health of our older residents.

With the grant support, the social afternoons were funded for 12 months. There was regular promotion to older people who may be socially isolated or lonely, including linking up with local nursing homes. Participants reported a reduction in social isolation and loneliness as well as improved mobility and balance.

The Bootle dances attract 60-80 older people each month and the Southport dances between 30-60 people.

**“When someone attends a tea dance on their own we always match them with a buddy so they feel more comfortable. From this, terrific friendships have developed and often they go on to do other things in the community together.”**  
Sefton OPERA volunteer

## Individuals

26 grants of up to £500 each went to individuals with small-scale ideas to improve wellbeing in their community.

These projects, often volunteer-led and existing just under the radar, are real community assets. The individuals were supported by existing constituted groups or Living Well Sefton partners and the money was held by these groups, ensuring that individuals received appropriate support and made links to enable them to develop their projects and ideas more successfully. The Community Resilience Officer also supported the application of every individual who came forward and met regularly with them to provide support with planning the delivery of their project.

Making Every Contact Count Training was offered to all recipients, as well as support from other Sefton CVS colleagues on topics such as bid writing and constituting a group. Through networking with other grant recipients and supporting organisations, individuals running small projects were given an opportunity to develop and grow, share ideas and make links to help sustain their good work. More than 300 members of our community participated in activities funded through Community Resilience Grants to individuals. Most of these were ongoing regular activities, providing a vital connection to services and support that they may not otherwise have had.

**31**  
projects supported  
to improve  
residents'  
mental health



**62**

organisations supported  
with the delivery of  
wellbeing activities



### Case Study: Stephen Bousfield, Christmas Lunch for the Community received £500



On Christmas Day 2017 the on-duty staff and a team of willing volunteers welcomed 24 older persons to Southport Fire and Ambulance Station for a Christmas Day meal.

The event was the brainchild of Sara Lace, a North West Ambulance Service paramedic, who started the event in 2014 having been made aware that many people spend Christmas completely alone. The event was delivered at no cost to the guests thanks to the Community Resilience Grant and other funding from individuals and organisations. Guests were transported to the station by volunteer drivers using vehicles provided by North West Ambulance Service, and they enjoyed a game of bingo, entertainment, a full Christmas dinner, a raffle in which everyone won a prize and a visit from Santa who gave each person a gift.

Steve Bousfield, one of the managers at Southport who assists Sara in running the event, said:

**“This event brought joy not only to the guests but also the staff and volunteers on duty. It brought to life the true meaning of Christmas. One lady thanked us for inviting her and said that this was the first Christmas in 20 years that she had not been alone. The staff who organised and ran the event are extremely grateful to Sefton CVS for their most generous donation that covered almost all of the costs of delivering the 2017 event.”**

**46**  
projects funded  
to reduce social  
isolation  
in the borough



### Case Study: Heather Dixon, Brain Injury Carers' Support Group received £500



Headway Sefton is a local group, established three years ago, to provide a point of contact and peer support for people in the borough who have suffered traumatic brain injuries, and their carers, family and friends.

Headway Sefton receives no national funding, so the support and activities offered are dependent on their own ability to raise funds.

The branch meets monthly at Waterloo Rugby Club and currently has more than 30 members who are survivors of brain injuries, their carers and families. Gradually members are starting to share their experiences, and assisted by a semi-structured talking group, they are beginning to form friendships and to feel safe in an environment where everyone understands the daily difficulties they face as a result of their hidden disabilities.

The Community Resilience Grant funding was requested to run an awareness day and to celebrate how far the group and the participants had come from its inception. The objectives of the day were to improve education and the understanding of the outside world about brain injury, and to provide carers, families and partners with practical support and guidance about how to best manage the new life of survivors. This was achieved through speakers discussing techniques to support survivors including NLP, music therapy and sleep hygiene. Brain injury survivors talked about the impact on their lives, and carers shared their stories of their struggles in this new role. Literature on brain injury and supporting information from our sponsors was also available on the day.

Around 90 people attended the event. All of the sessions received positive feedback in evaluations. There was very positive feedback about what delegates will do as a result of the day.

One carer responded: **"My aim is to be patient and more understanding, listen, encourage more positive thinking, try to be more supportive."**

A brain injury survivor pledged to: **"Listen to more music, repeat affirmations."**

One professional commented: **"I will talk to managers about how to introduce music therapy at work, run training sessions for staff and improve my experience and training."**

### Case Study: Eden Tots, Healthy Cooking for Families received £500



Lorna and other leaders from the Eden Tots Playgroup delivered a four-week healthy cooking course to families in Netherton over the summer holidays, teaching them how to cook affordable healthy and nutritious meals with fresh ingredients.

Activities in the sessions which lasted two and half hours each included colouring-in sheets about healthy eating and a short talk comparing the cost and nutritional value of cooking with fresh ingredients, as opposed to takeaways and processed foods. There was a hands-on cooking demonstration where attendees learnt how to cook healthy meals such as pasta bolognese, chicken curry, beef stir fry and turkey burgers with sweet potato wedges. After the cooking demonstration the families sat and ate the food they'd prepared together, washed up together and were then given the recipe and a bag of essential ingredients to take away so they could cook the meal again at home. Over the four weeks, seven families attended, comprising of seven adults and 17 children and the sessions were run by a team of four volunteers. In addition to the financial support received from Living Well Sefton, Eden Tots also received support and advice from Living Well Sefton staff and Sefton CVS.

**"Your visit during the planning stage helped us to develop our idea to focus more on community-led learning and using the funding to pay for ingredients for those who attended. We didn't pay for a professional chef to deliver cooking courses and instead utilised the skills and experience of the volunteers, planning and delivering the course ourselves. We also received support from Sefton CVS in advertising our course through their networks to families who needed extra support to feed their children during the summer holidays, hence our focus on delivering future courses during the school holiday."** Lorna - Eden Tots

**11** projects aimed at supporting people with **disabilities and/or their carers**



## Sefton 4 Good – Year of the Volunteer

Sefton 4 Good is a charity initiative from Sefton CVS that encourages local people to come together and give their time, skills, money and resources to help local good causes.

Sefton 4 Good launched a second round of grants in 2018 as part of Sefton's Year of the Volunteer campaign. To coincide with the campaign's theme the funding was used to develop and enhance volunteer-involving initiatives. The grant pot consisted of contributions of funds from Sefton 4 Good, Sefton Council and Living Well Sefton. Living Well Sefton contributed £3,000 to support this initiative.



**35**  
grants  
allocated to  
projects in **the  
north locality**



**44**  
grants allocated  
to projects in  
the **central and  
south localities**



**12**  
**borough-wide**  
projects  
funded



## Future of the grants programme

Sefton CVS is delighted that the Living Well Sefton contract has been funded by Public Health for a further three to five years, offering more opportunity to fund projects in the community that improve the health and wellbeing of residents. £50,000 per year has been allocated.

Phase two of the Community Resilience Grants will open with a round focusing on 'Food and Friends', healthy eating with a focus on eating together supporting Sefton Council's Year of Friendship.



As well as the continuation of the Community Resilience Grants for organisations and individuals, £40,000 per year has been ring-fenced for our Neighbourhood Partner Grants which will help to identify local needs and assets, supported by the area lead organisations. Living Well Sefton, in partnership with Sefton Public Health, is also offering small to medium enterprises (SMEs) grants of up to £500 to improve the wellbeing of employees. Working with employers to help them recognise the benefits of improved staff wellbeing to their organisation is an important first step to improving workplace health and wellbeing. These grants, with a value of £10,000 per year, will allow Living Well Sefton to access groups who are often harder to reach through traditional wellbeing programmes (for example those working long hours, men, manual workers etc).

For more details about recipients of Living Well Sefton Community Resilience Programme Grants visit:

<http://www.livingwellsefton.org.uk/community.html>

**£12,616**  
 allocated to  
**applications from  
 individuals**




**3**  
 projects aimed at  
 BME communities/  
 migrant workers/  
 refugees/  
 asylum seekers



**9**  
 projects aimed at  
 supporting **healthy  
 eating and food**



**4** projects aimed  
 at **supporting  
 men**






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