Community Board Quarterly Meeting

Wednesday 26 April 2023, 2 - 4pm

Argyle House, Meeting Room 14, Floor E & Teams

Chair: Gemma Gourlay, Head of Social Impact, Department of Social Responsibility & Sustainability (deputising for Dave Gorman)

Attending:
Sarah Anderson, Senior Community Engagement Programme Manager, Social Responsibility and Sustainability
Bridie Ashrowan, Chief Executive, EVOC
Patricia Erskine, Head of Stakeholder Relations, College Office – CAHSS
Ian Fyfe, Senior Lecturer, Moray House School of Education and Sport, IECS
Eppy Harries-Pugh, Communications Manager, Social Responsibility and Sustainability
Hazel Lambert, Head of Communications, Marketing & Engagement, College of Medicine & Veterinary Medicine
Lesley McAra, Assistant Principal Community Relations and Director of Institute of Advanced Studies in the Humanities
Jacky MacBeath, Head of Heritage Collections (Access & Engagement), Library & University Collections, ISG
Lynn McMath, Director Stakeholder Relations, Communications and Marketing
Derek MacLeod, Head of Global Partnerships, Edinburgh Global
Pat Reid, Widening Participation Manager, Student Recruitment and Admissions
Zoe Stephens, Head of Organisational Development and Change, Estates Management Group
Stuart Tooley, Community Relations Manager, Communications and Marketing
Isi Williams, EUSA VP Community

Apologies:
Dave Gorman, Director of Social Responsibility and Sustainability
Anne-Sofie Laegran, Head of Knowledge Exchange and Impact, Edinburgh Research Office
James Mooney, Director of Open Studies, Centre for Open Learning
Cameron Ritchie, Depute Director and Head of Operations, University Sport and Exercise
Sean Smith, Director of the Centre for Future Infrastructure, Institute for Infrastructure and Environment

In Attendance:
Kristy Docherty, Director of Public Services, Sector Engagement Lead, Edinburgh Futures Institute

Agenda

	Time	Item	Paper (closed/ open)
1.	2.00pm	Approval of meeting minute of 8 February 2023 **(Gemma Gourlay)**	A

2.	2.05pm	Matters Arising, not otherwise covered in the agenda **(Gemma Gourlay)**	
3.	2.15pm	Public Services at the Edinburgh Futures Institute **(Kristy Docherty, Director of Public Services, Sector Engagement Lead, Edinburgh Futures Institute)** [presentation]	-
4.	2.45pm	CAHSS Social & Civic Responsibility Statement **(Patricia Erskine)** [Brief verbal presentation]	B - **closed**
5.	3.00pm	**Comfort break**	-
6.	3.10pm	Community Plan reporting and refresh processes **(Gemma Gourlay, Sarah Anderson)**	C
7.	3.25pm	Standing item: report from the Cost of Living Working Group **(Lynn McMath)**	-
8.	3.35pm	Highlights from community grant impact evaluation **(Gemma Gourlay, Sarah Anderson)** [presentation]	D
9.	3.50pm	Standing Item: Community Team and Communications update *(Stuart Tooley/Eppy Harries-Pugh/Sarah Anderson)* [Paper primarily for information]	E - closed
10.	3.55pm	AOB	
11.	4.00pm	Meeting close	

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MINUTE OF A MEETING *of the Community Board held in Meeting Room 14, Argyle House and via MS Teams on Wednesday 8 February 2023.*

Present:	Gemma Gourlay, Head of Social Impact, Department of Social Responsibility & Sustainability (GG) (Chair)
	Sarah Anderson, Community Engagement Programme Manager (SA)
	Bridie Ashrowan, Chief Executive, EVOC (BA)
	Katrina Castle, Head of Strategic Partnerships and Transitions, Student Recruitment and Admissions (KC)
	Patricia Erskine, Head of Stakeholder Relations, College Office – CAHSS (PE)
	Ian Fyfe, Senior Lecturer, Moray House School of Education and Sport, IECS (IF)
	Dave Gorman, Director of Social Responsibility and Sustainability (DG)
	Eppy Harries-Pugh, Communications Manager, Department for Social Responsibility and Sustainability (EH-P)
	Hazel Lambert, Head of Communications, Marketing & Engagement, College of Medicine & Veterinary Medicine (HL)
	Jacky MacBeath, Head of Heritage Collections (Access & Engagement), Library & University Collections, ISG (JMcB)
	Lesley McAra, Assistant Principal Community Relations and Director of Institute of Advanced Studies in the Humanities (LMcA)
	James Mooney, Director of Open Studies, Centre for Open Learning
	Cameron Ritchie, Depute Director and Head of Operations, University Sport and Exercise (CR)
	Sean Smith, Director of the Centre for Future Infrastructure, Institute for Infrastructure and Environment (SS)
	Zoe Stephens, Head of Organisational Development and Change, Estates Management Group (ZS)
	Stuart Tooley, Community Relations Manager, Communications and Marketing (ST)
	Isi Williams, EUSA VP Community (IW)
In attendance:	Sarah Barnard, SRS Committees and Administration Officer (SB) (minute)
	Vanessa McCorquodale, Community & Student Engagement Manager for the Forest and Peatland Programme (VMcC) (presenting)
Apologies:	Derek MacLeod, Head of Global Partnerships and Community, Edinburgh Global
	Anne Douglas, SRS Community Engagement Administrator
	Lynn McMath, Deputy Director, Stakeholder Relations
	Anne-Sofie Legran, Head of Knowledge Exchange and Impact, Edinburgh Research Office.

1 Approval of meeting minute of 1 December 2022   A

The Community Board minute of 1 December 2022 was approved.

2 Matters Arising, not otherwise covered in the agenda

    (1) Minute item 2(1) Sarah Anderson shared an update from Derek MacLeod, who had sent apologies for the meeting, regarding the Global Situation and Emergency Response.

    (2) Minute item 5(2) Gemma Gourlay reported a positive meeting with the Provost, had shared current thinking about Community Plan and its alignment with Strategy 2030, and will prepare briefing around Community Wealth Building for senior colleagues. Also presenting to procurement as part of procurement strategy refresh.

(3) Minute item 2(3) the Social Impact Pledges had been approved by SCSR Committee and been signed by the Principal, would now go to Scottish Government for publication.

(4) Minute item 4(1) Current EFI focus is on 2023/24 cohort. The building will not be open until spring 2024, but there is engagement around events – the current season is 'Love Machine'. Work is ongoing on a Community Engagement Statement, mapping of stakeholders and exploring how to support colleagues in delivering the 'Open to All' vision.

(5) Minute item 5(1) Ongoing.
Action: LMcA – pass on details of relevant staff members to Bridie.

3 SRS land acquisition and community engagement implication

Vanessa McCorquodale, Community & Student Engagement Manager for the Forest and Peatland Programme, gave a presentation on the Forest and Peatland Programme and its recent land acquisition.

Additional points raised and discussed included:

- EVOC coordinate Edinburgh Communities Climate Action Forum.
- Opportunity to create links between Drumbrae (the suburb in Corstorphine/Clermiston) and the University, as the new land acquired is named Drumbrae.
- The University is involved with the Little Sparta Trust – there could be potential conversations about that land.
- Expansion of the geographical area occupied by the University may necessitate reconsideration of who and where our 'community' is. There are opportunities and risks in terms of our community engagement work, which we will have to consider in the next iteration of the community plan.
- The land acquired is in the University of Stirling's geographical area. Dave Gorman, the Director of Social Responsibility and Sustainability (SRS), confirmed the University has communicated with Stirling and that the Forest, Peat and Rural Land Manager would be visiting their researchers next week. Jacky MacBeath, Head of Heritage Collections (Access & Engagement), Library & University Collections, noted the University of Stirling's excellent mindfulness programmes, which make active use of their grounds.
- Kirsty Adamson, previously of the Centre for Open Learning, is now Depute Principal of Newbattle Abbey College – there may be potential for partnerships with their Forest College.

4 Curriculum Transformation Experiential Learning Group: presentation

Lesley McAra, Assistant Principal Community Relations and Director of the Institute of Advanced Studies in the Humanities, gave a presentation on the work of the group she chairs under the Curriculum Transformation Programme: the Experiential Learning (EL) Group.

Additional points raised and discussed included:

- Hosting a student for an experiential learning placement is not resource-neutral for the host organisation. Community groups may not have capacity or resources to support students. It was suggested corporates and community groups could be paired to build these resources.
- Board members generally agreed the CTP curriculum frameworks would benefit from incorporating more experiential learning.
- It would be important to consult with the community sector to mitigate risk of oversaturation and exhaustion with requests for student placements. However, we might expand our view to the broader City Region, which would help with this.

Additionally, the Forests and Peatlands project will be partnering with landowners across Scotland, which opens further opportunities for new partners who will not have the same fatigue.

- Some areas of the University (including Moray House) have a long history of placing students in community organisations, and there would be much to learn from colleagues regarding that infrastructure of formal placements.
- Sports & Exercise employ a relatively large number of students, with ambition to reach 40% of headcount as student employment. Cameron Ritchie, Deputy Director and Head of Operations, University Sport and Exercise, encouraged the EL working group to make a case study of the students employed, who undergo experiential learning by way of professional development opportunities.
- Bridie Ashrowan recommended involving Social Enterprise Scotland and Volunteer Edinburgh in discussions.

5 Community Plan update

Gemma Gourlay, Head of Social Impact, gave a presentation on delivery of the Community Plan and progress made in the second year since the plan's publication (December 2021 - December 2022). The web page with case studies is now live: What we've done in year two. The presentation was well-received by the Board, noting the diversity and range of work across the University and across the city region. Eppy Harries-Pugh, Communications Manager, Social Responsibility and Sustainability, confirmed the case studies would be communicated to key partners and social media over the following weeks.

Action: EH-P, ST and BA to coordinate communications plan

It was raised that this presentation was for a general audience and might not engage colleagues in Schools and Colleges, as they would not necessarily see themselves in it. More could be done internally to ensure buy-in, as well as externally to raise awareness outside of the University.

6 CAHSS Social & Civic Responsibility Statement   B

This item was deferred to the next meeting of the Board.

7 Standing item: report from the Cost of Living Working Group

The Poverty Commission Working Group evolved into the Cost of Living Working Group. A report was submitted into the organisation managing the Commission. Public blog is also online on the Edinburgh Partnership website. The working group had discussed:

- Warm & welcoming spaces;
- Thinking about staff poverty, staff discount schemes;
- Improving generosity of scholarships;
- How much it costs to go to UoE.

It had additionally heard the asks from the Edinburgh University Students' Association (via Isi Williams, VP Community) regarding student cost of living: rent, transports, lunches and fines.

Dave Gorman has asked Catherine Martin to convene another meeting Cost of Living staff engagement.

8 Standing Item: Community Team and Communications update   C
Eppy Harries-Pugh has returned from maternity leave to an updated role, and Jenna Bogan has started as Community Team Modern Apprentice, focusing on Digital Marketing and Communications.

9 AOB

A funding opportunity to establish a centre in community participation and connectedness has arisen (see [here on UKRI website](#)). Lesley McAra is looking to submit a bid. The closing date for applications is 17 May.

Ian Fyfe, Senior Lecturer, Moray House School of Education and Sport, IECS flagged that local authorities are currently putting forward budget reduction proposals, and that we might start forward planning to protect quality of life for staff and students.
<u>Action:</u> IF to set up meeting with interested Board members and others

COMMUNITY BOARD

26 April 2023

Community Plan reporting and refresh processes

Description of paper

1. This paper outlines initial thoughts from the Community Team and Head of Social Impact on:

i. Reporting on year 3 of the Community Plan (internal and external)

ii. Refreshing the current Community Plan, the updated version running from 2025.

Action requested/Recommendation

2. The Board is asked to **provide feedback** on the approaches suggested in this paper.

Background and context

3. The final internal and external reports on year two of the University's current Community Plan were published/circulated in February 2023. The data collection process for year two aimed to improve on that for year one by ensuring that there was data from beyond the Community Team, i.e., from across the Community Board's representation and beyond. The process was particularly successful in getting data from across the wider University: a short, informal survey and targeted 1:1 meetings yielded ~70 A4 pages of useable content. This data has been circulated in full internally; the external report has been heavily curated to cover all five Community Plan themes with varied, impactful, and engaging content that was not already reported in year one.

4. The current Community Plan expires in 2025. The Community Plan supports the Social and Civic Responsibility focus of Strategy 2030 and sits under the University's Social and Civic Responsibility Delivery Plan. The current Community Plan is a series of 32 public commitments (plus additional ones regarding manner of implementation) for practical action that the University will have taken by 2025. The Plan was created through extensive external and internal consultation in 2019 and 2020, informed by pre-existing knowledge; the final draft was composed by the University's Assistant Principal Community Relations and former Deputy Director, Stakeholder Relations. The consultation was run by members of the Community Team but Community Board members, both past and present, were consulted on and in some cases fed back on or approved the content, structure, and approach for both creating the Plan and the Plan itself.

5. The remit and responsibilities of the Community Board were agreed at the April 2021 meeting of the Board as being "to drive the delivery, and have oversight, of Community Plan commitments and to report on this to the SCSR Committee" (original paper).

6. The reporting year for the Community Plan is from 1st January to 31st December in the relevant year.

Discussion

7. The Community Team and other colleagues are hugely grateful for the wealth of rich, accurate content (text, numbers, and images) submitted by members of this Board and others in the University for 2022 reporting. There was a breadth of excellent data, both narrative and metric, that covered work far beyond that being directly delivered by the Community Team, in contrast to 2021 reporting. Data was received for all 32 commitments from varied parts of the University. Those involved with data analysis feel that we now have a good picture of how the University is performing on each commitment.

8. The volume of data received for 2022 reporting exceeded our positive expectations. Only a small amount could be curated for the public report. Everything in scope and not confidential has been shared in the internal report, but the size of this document means few colleagues are likely to read most of it. Communications colleagues in the Department for Social Responsibility and Sustainability will use the full content to generate social media outputs throughout 2023, creating an opportunity to also remind audiences of the main public report.

9. Something that has become explicit during the 2022 reporting process is that the internal audience is distinct from the external audience and is important. The internal audience is important to ensure whole institution embedding of Community Plan delivery. Sizeable sections of the University, including some senior leaders, are currently unaware of the University's strategic commitments to working with local communities. Internal and external audiences have different appetites.

10. The volume of data submitted for 2022 reporting posed a practical challenge in terms of data assembly. The task was more time consuming than anticipated, and pre-assembly was required to allow curation for the external report to take place – the volume of data was simply too great for communications colleagues to work directly from it. This task was owned by the Community Team (Sarah Anderson) in 2022.

11. Some fantastic stories that were submitted for 2022 reporting would have had greater communications value had they been brought to our attention at the time they were happening. Now that there is improved central communications capacity for community engagement, the timing seems right to try and facilitate that continuous flow of stories into the team, whether via the Community Board, Community Team, or another route. With the right content, we can explore more impactful internal communications routes (e.g., spotlight on social impact for Bulletin).

12. Given the challenge outlined in paragraph 10 and now-realistic ambition outlined in 11, the suggestion for 2023 Community Plan reporting is that data collection focuses on commitments where the Community Board's collective knowledge indicates that there is likely to be notable change expected during the 2023 calendar year. The process for

this is still to be to be determined, but there are some routes to data already in place: the Board's implementation tracker; some regular 1:1 meetings with colleagues who are effectively commitment 'owners'; re-running of the light-touch internal survey used successfully in 2022. To ensure consistency with 2022 public reporting, which covered all five themes of the plan, data collection would take care to ensure there is still publicly reportable information across all five themes.

13. The proposal is that reporting for the 2023 calendar year still considers both internal and external audiences, for reasons already outlined but also to allow us to hold ourselves accountable even when something is not at a place to be discussed in public reporting.

14. A refresh of the mapping of internal and external stakeholders for (1) data collection and (2) communication of report findings may be required for 2023. Stakeholder mapping will also be required as a starting point to the process to update the current Community Plan. Mapping is a key part of designing a consultation and involvement process that uses suitable engagement channels, including corporate communications. Stakeholder mapping and prioritisation will also inform a strategic approach to corporate internal and external communications related to community.

15. Two half-day initial workshops to design the process refreshing the Community Plan are taking place at the end of May and early June 2023. These workshops will be attended by colleagues who were heavily involved with the last Community Plan processes or who are likely to this time: Stuart Tooley; Lynn McMath; Lesley McAra; Gemma Gourlay; Sarah Anderson; Eppy Harries-Pugh; Jill Burnett. Jill is the holder of a new post, Senior Implementation manager, in the Department for Social Responsibility and Sustainability; the rest are members of the Community Board. The 2023 data collection process and refresh process will need to talk to one another.

16. Learning from the current Plan (e.g., fantastic activity that does not fit any commitment; difficulty quantifying what difference the University is making holistically to calls to action like the Edinburgh Poverty Commission's), the suggestion is that the refreshed Community Plan takes an **outcomes** or **thematic**-focussed approach. Certain United Nations Sustainable Development Goal indicators naturally 'rose to the top' in the evaluation of the community grant scheme (see separate paper) and these may be a place to start; they have the advantage of being a bottom-up indication of the wants and needs of local communities. Given that this is a refresh of a strategy that covers community engagement and relations, it will be important to continue to 'practice what we preach' in designing the refresh process, as was achieved through the 2019-20 process. This will include making best use of information already in the public domain and/or in our possession, as well as new consultation and involvement, to ensure we have listened and learned from what has already been told and made new engagement is meaningful for all parties.

17. The **wider University strategic context** of the Community Plan is something to which thought needs to be given. There is substantial cross-over between, for example,

the Social and Civic Delivery Plan's third section, the Community Plan and, currently, University work to develop a social impact metric (the last area could, over time, hypothetically move beyond local geographic scope but is currently a Community Plan commitment). An Accommodation, Catering and Events residential strategy is also being developed and there may be a possibility of collaborating on resident consultation. A control on the strategic front is an early conversation with Governance and Strategic Planning, which has already taken place. Jennifer McGregor (Senior Strategic Planner, Governance and Strategic Planning) has indicated her department would welcome being involved in the update process, especially considering recent collaboration on the University's social impact evaluation. Governance and Strategic Planning liaise with colleagues across the university as they develop other strategies and plans, so can facilitate coordinated working with stakeholders.

18. Developments in and developing practice in the higher education and other sectors on impact measurement frameworks, whether called social audit, social impact reporting, evaluation, or something else, will need to be appraised to ensure the University is adopting leading practice in its institutional approach. A couple of insights from Social Audit Network training (attended by Sarah Anderson) are already included in this paper: focussing on just a sub-set of indicators in some reporting cycles and considering the Sustainable Development Goals as possible strategic objectives. The work of the Civic University Network, especially its Civic Agreements, will also require attention. Exploration of these together with other Edinburgh universities has already started (on hold at present but intended to resume). The Impact Framework for Rural Communities (developed by Social Value Lab for Highlands and Islands Enterprise, in collaboration with Development Trust Association Scotland, Scottish Enterprise, and South of Scotland Enterprise) being explored by the University's Forestry and Peatlands appeals to the Community Team on initial reading.

19. Something the refresh process needs to consider is how **necessary internal culture change** required to deliver on a Community Plan is strategically supported. Where community engagement takes the form of engaged research, there is already a University statement on supporting supporting public engagement with research and the tools and indicators (e.g., EDGE tool) created by the Beltane Public Engagement Network and National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement. We are not aware of similar strategic statements, yet, that support change needed in other parts of the University: teaching, but also the University's operational and professional services units. It may not be necessary to create a new logic model/theory of change to underpin internal change required to manifest the 2025-30 Community Plan goals, but the need should be considered. It should be noted that the workload for evaluating progress against off-the-shelf internal culture change models, such as the EDGE tool, can be substantial and has led the University to choose not to adopt such models in the past.

Resource implications
20. The reporting process and, to a greater extent, the Community Plan refresh process, will, at times, makes significant demands on the time of existing staff in the Community Team, Social Impact Unit, SRS (Social Responsibility and Sustainability)

Communications and Communications and Marketing external affairs team. There will be some demand on the time of all Community Board members between now and 2025; similarly, Governance and Strategic Planning staff. A three-month, full-time undergraduate intern is being recruited for June-August 2023 inclusive to assist with data collection (design and delivery) and desk research, both for 2023 Community Plan reporting and the initial stages of the Community Plan refresh. The intern will be based in the Social Impact Unit in the Department for Social Responsibility and Sustainability. Evaluating institutional progress against a theory of internal culture change could demand substantial time from a range of staff across the organisation, especially for the initial baseline. Developing the theoretical model may be less demanding as several good adaptable examples already seem to exist.

Risk Management
21. As Strategy 2030 is in place until 2030, and the current version of the Community Plan expires in 2025, there is a risk of institutional missed opportunity and underperformance, with associated reputational damage, if a strategic approach to working with communities for 2025-30 is not designed. Staff capacity challenges have been considered as part of the refresh and reporting process planned for the next 2 years and steps taken to mitigate. The risk of over-consulting or disenfranchising communities through the Plan refresh process is being mitigated through a considered approach to its design, which is starting two years out from when the refreshed Plan is required. This reflects learning from the previous refresh process. Learning from previous internal culture change initiatives will inform the refresh process also, particularly around staff time and bandwidth across the organisation.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals
22. The work of the Community Plan particularly delivers on the following Sustainable Development Goals:

Equality & Diversity
23. A well-designed and delivered refresh process for the Community Plan will help to ensure equality, diversity, and inclusion in how the University works with and for local communities. This would include undertaking Equalities Impact Assessments where indicated.

Next steps/implications
24. Feedback from the Community Board will further shape the planned process for year 3 reporting and the Community Plan refresh. It is expected that more involved development with the Community Board, in the form of workshops, will take place in the

latter half of 2023, once a timeline and structure for the refresh process is more developed. It is likely that discussion with the Sustainability, Civic and Social Responsibility will be needed at some point.

Consultation
22. Members of the Community Team, the University's Director of Social Responsibility and Sustainability, Dave Gorman, and Jennifer McGregor of Governance and Strategic Planning have been consulted.

Further information

Authors	*Presenters*
Sarah Anderson	**Sarah Anderson**
Senior Community Engagement Manager	Senior Community Engagement Manager
Social Responsibility and Sustainability	Social Responsibility and Sustainability
Gemma Gourlay	**Gemma Gourlay**
Head of Social Impact	Head of Social Impact
Social Responsibility and Sustainability	Social Responsibility and Sustainability

Freedom of Information
24. Open.

COMMUNITY BOARD

26 April 2023

Highlights from community grant impact evaluation

Description of paper

1. This paper provides a brief summary of the highlight findings from the five year evaluation of the impact of the University's community grant scheme (appendix A and at https://edin.ac/3USRtjj).

Action requested/Recommendation

2. The Board is asked to **note** the points raised for their attention in **paragraphs 10-15** and **express their interest** in joining a separate meeting to discuss them more fully. The Board is asked to **note** the rest of findings and to share the evaluation report with internal and external colleagues who may be interested in it.

Background and context

3. The community grant scheme was launched in the autumn of 2017, shortly after the University's first community strategy was approved and published. The scheme makes awards of up to £5,000 to community organisations in the City of Edinburgh, Lothians, Fife and Scottish Borders for projects which promote positive social impact and development of community-University relationships. The scheme has an advertised budget of £55,000 per year (previously £50,000). Colleagues in the University's Communications and Marketing and Social Responsibility and Sustainability departments manage the scheme, but it is branded as an 'Edinburgh Local' or 'University of Edinburgh' scheme.

4. For a number of reasons, including feedback from external prize submissions and national 'fair funding' emerging best practice, the Community Team together with the Head of Social Impact and Deputy Director Stakeholder Relations carried out a formative and summative evaluation of the scheme between summer 2022 and February 2023. A primary focus of this evaluation was the overarching difference the scheme had made to local communities.

Discussion

5. Summary statistics for the scheme covering autumn 2017 to spring 2023 are as follows:

- Total cash awarded: £555,726 (cp. ~£275,000 publicly committed to awarding during this period)
    - 119 main grants (up to £4,500/£5,000)
    - 94 micro-grants (including themed round – COP26/Green, Covid-19)
- Total projects funded: 213 individual projects
- Total organisations funded: 176 unique community organisation
- Percentage of organisations funded more than once: 17% of all organisations funded
- Individuals benefitting: 26,372 people (conservative estimate)
- Partnership with the University: around 1/3 of 157 projects reported University involvement during their grant

5. The evaluation has found that the scheme's biggest impact is against United Nations Sustainable Development Goal Indicator **3.4: 'Reduce mortality from non-communicable diseases and promote mental health'**, closely followed by **10.2: 'Empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status'**; at least 140 projects contributed to the former and in excess of 115 to the latter.

6. Given the social focus of the scheme, more funded projects than might be expected contributed to 1**1.7 'Provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces'**; this is likely due to COP26 taking place in Glasgow in 2021 and the impact of Covid-19 restrictions on indoor delivery of activities. This positive interaction between society and the natural world is welcomed and talks to the University's strategic integrated approach to social responsibility and sustainability.

7. Many projects were sustained beyond the funded period, University funding having allowed concepts to be proven. The University name itself helped leverage further investment in some instances. Other projects obtained further funding or had built capacity and relationships that meant projects could continue to operate without further funding.

8. Around one-third of organisations reported working with the University's staff and students on their projects. At least one academic publication has resulted from these partnerships, with more in the pipeline.

9. A number of steps to make the scheme more accessible and inclusive have been identified. Many of these, including substantial changes to application forms and process, have been implemented for the spring 2023 round.

10. To provide applicants with a clearer definition of 'positive social impact' and facilitate easier impact evaluation future, Sustainable Development Goals [3 Good Health and Wellbeing](), [4 Quality Education](), [8 Decent Work and Economic Growth](), [10 Reduced Inequalities]() and [11 Sustainable Cities and Communities]() have been included in the definition of social impact for the latest round. The success of this will be evaluated after the current funding round closes. **The Community Team is satisfied that the choice to use Sustainable Development Goals as social impact objectives is future-proof and aligned in terms of University strategy, but would welcome thoughts from the Board.**

11. Analysis of end of grant reports indicated that a disproportionately high number of projects funded benefit children and young people when compared to local population averages. This is currently not intentional. **The Board is asked to consider whether this should be an explicit objective of the scheme in future, or whether efforts should be made to rebalance the age spread of beneficiaries.**

12. Analysis of projects funded to date shows that almost all funded projects – 183 out of 213 – have gone to organisations based in the City of Edinburgh. Only 30 projects have been funded in the Lothians, Fife and Borders. **The Board is asked to consider whether priority should be given to projects closer to the University's estate, or whether a more equitable geographic spread should be aimed for.**

13. A wealth of feedback on what local community organisations want from the University has been provided in end-of-grant reports. This is on page 42 of [the full evaluation report]() and repeated here:

- Volunteers – many organisations mention both staff and student volunteers, for all sorts of roles, including senior roles like board members, specific skills such as business development, finance, charity governance, HR, conservation, food production, fundraising, ground works construction or one-off communications support
- Making use of student (undergraduate and postgraduate) research skills for e.g. mapping, community consultation, evaluation
- University open days, tours and talks targeted to their audiences, including conversations with current students
- Funding information: for projects, both from the University and other funders, and for University attendance
- Free venues or other University facilities open to members of the public
- Placements or work experience at the University for their audiences
- Chance to get involved with action research

- University students to come on placement or internship to their organisation
- Access to University mental health assets, e.g. Mindfulness Chaplain
- Getting University staff and students to engage with the support they offer
- External audit of their organisation and evaluation of their projects
- To offer their services to the University on a paid basis
- Using University communications to publicise their activities and organisation
- Research collaborations
- Access to CPD opportunities, formal or informal, for their staff
- For the University staff to use their spaces as bases for research and engagement
- Subject-specific specialist academic input (e.g. entomology) or being brought up to speed on the state of the art
- Donations of physical goods (e.g. furniture)
- Sponsorship
- To be added as an agency that helps international students settle locally
- Being connected with other organisations (e.g. other community grantees or other local larger charities) who have similar interests
- Information about University culture and arts activities that could interest their audiences
- Access to University archives and collections

All items on this list were a response to the question "Please tell us what further contact with the University, if any, could be beneficial to your organisation or project". **The Community Board is encouraged to share this list with colleagues and students as a starting point for working with local communities.**

14. The scheme revealed that one-third of funded projects seemed to have had University involvement. Few of these relationships had come about via the Community Team or grant review panel, however, in spite of best efforts; many relied on pre-existing relationships. This may pose a disadvantage to community organisations with no link to the University. It is also a missed opportunity for researchers whom we know are increasingly looking for community partners. One idea of more successful relationship brokering is to run themed round of grants, with preparatory workshops for staff, students and community groups. **The Board is invited to consider the idea of themed rounds and suggest any other ideas for more successful relationship brokering.**

15. The Equalities Impact Assessment of the scheme indicated that the project-based funding model the grant scheme employs contributes to the precariousness of the third sector, which disproportionately negatively impacts women and BAME-led organisations. Funding a small number of organisations over the longer-term could help

address precariousness but may also help with brokering relationships (paragraph 14). This could be done alongside a reduced number of still project-based awards. **The Board is asked to consider the idea of longer-term funding relationships with a small number of organisations.**

16. The evaluation findings can be shared beyond the University and we are keen to disseminate the knowledge and learning with any interested party. To help with this:
- Social Responsibility and Sustainability communications are going to utilise the scheme's executive summary and put together a web page to share key findings on the University's community grants web page.
- Stuart Tooley (Community Relations Manager) is going to share the finalised report (once received) with corporate communications to see if there might be an angle for an external news story.

Resource implications

17. The impact stories and other findings from the evaluation report will be used internally to make the case of possible additional funding for the scheme. It is expected that improved processes for the scheme will reduce the staff resource needed to administer it following an initial teething period.

Risk Management

18. There is a risk of missed opportunity in terms of partnership with local communities that is currently not sufficiently addressed. There is a risk of over-consulting communities if the feedback they've provided on what they want from the University is not heeded.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

19. The work of the Community Team particularly contributes to the following Sustainable Development Goals:

Equality & Diversity

20. The apparent disproportionate benefit of the scheme by children and young people requires discussion by the Board so that an institutional position on this, including justification for continuing the status quo (if that is the preference), is formulated.

Next steps/implications
21. The findings of the evaluation will be presented in similar form to this to the Sustainability, Civic and Social Responsibility Committee and then University Executive before the end of 2023.

Consultation
22. The Community Team, Social Responsibility and Sustainability communications colleagues, Head of Social Impact and Deputy Director, Stakeholder Relations have been involved with the evaluation process and preparing the final report. The Director of Social Responsibility and Sustainability has reviewed the final full report.

Further information

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Freedom of Information
24. Open.

University of Edinburgh Community Grant Scheme

Five year impact evaluation

Prepared by Sarah Anderson, Senior Community Engagement Manager

THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH
Social Responsibility & Sustainability

University of Edinburgh Community Grant Scheme

Five-Year Impact Evaluation

Contents

Summary briefing

Summary and recommendations

This report documents the findings and recommendations of an evaluation of the University of Edinburgh's community grant scheme. The scheme began in autumn 2017; the evaluation was undertaken by staff at the University of Edinburgh between the summer of 2022 and the spring of 2023. The purpose of the evaluation has been to both **identify the impact of University funding**, including holistically and over the longer-term, and to identify areas where the **scheme's operations** could be made even better. On the latter, both funding **best practice** and **efficiencies** have been considerations.

The evaluation has found that the scheme's **biggest impact** is against **United Nations Sustainable Development Goal Indicator** *3.4: Reduce mortality from non-communicable diseases and promote mental health*, closely followed by *10.2: Empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status*; at least **140 projects** contributed to the former and **in excess of 115** to the latter. Given the social focus of the scheme, more funded projects than might be expected contributed to *11.7 Provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces*; this is likely due to **COP26** taking place in Glasgow in 2021 and the impact of **Covid-19** restrictions on indoor delivery of activities. This positive **interaction between society and the natural world** is welcomed and talks to the University's strategic approach to social responsibility and sustainability. Information on the longer-term impacts of funded projects will always be limited due to the capacity of organisations who receive community grants, but it is clear that **many projects were sustained beyond the funded period**, University funding having allowed **concepts to be proven**.

Immediate benefits for project participants ranged from increased parenting confidence and going in a swimming pool for the first time to improved economic wellbeing, better mental health, improved support networks and access to essential services. Anecdotes and case studies indicate the types of **positive destinations** that some project participants went on to, which included returning to tertiary education, obtaining employment and becoming peer educators

Around **one-third of organisations** reported working with the **University's staff and students** on their projects. At least 1 **academic publication** has resulted from these partnerships, with more in the pipeline.

In conducting this evaluation, a challenge has been that the objectives of the scheme were deliberately kept broad when the scheme was created; the scope of the scheme is still open, which is an evaluation challenge and also means we receive many more applications than we could fund. It's recommended that more specific scheme objectives, in the form of the Sustainable Development Goals used for this evaluation, are adopted.

For the scheme's operations, we've recommended moving to an **online system** for reasons of **accessibility** and **efficiency**. Our evaluation suggests that, as it stands, the work involved with applying for funding and reporting on completed projects is disproportionate to the scheme's benefits and risk profile. A re-working of scheme's questions and a reduction in the additional documents applicants need to submit is recommended.

The number of **BAME-led organisations** funded is what we would expect given local population averages. Projects that benefit **LGBTQI+ groups** are **underrepresented** among those funded to date, while those that include **children and young people** among their beneficiaries are **overrepresented**; neither are necessarily indicative of anything wrong, and may actually be a sign of something right, but require exploration. Geographic analysis indicates **very good coverage of the City of Edinburgh** but gaps in the neighbouring local authorities covered by the scheme, especially **Fife**. Recommended next steps regarding all – underlined: targeted external communications and explicit internal discussion of scheme purpose – are given in this report

Vital statistics (autumn 2017-spring 2023)

- Total cash awarded: **£555,726** (cp. ~£275,000 publicly committed to awarding during this period)
    - **119 main grants** (up to £4,500/£5,000)
    - **94 micro-grants** (including themed round – COP26/Green, Covid-19)
- Total projects funded: **213 individual projects**
- Total organisations funded: **176 unique community organisation**
- Percentage of organisations funded more than once: **17% of all organisations funded**
- Individuals benefitting: **26,372 people** (conservative estimate)
- Partnership with the University: around 1/3 **of 157 projects** reported University involvement during their grant

Geographic spread of funded projects

| Local authority	Number of organisations funded
City of Edinburgh	183
Midlothian	6
West Lothian	6
East Lothian	8
Fife	2
Scottish Borders	7
Other*	1

When geographic mapping of demographic insights was undertaken, **more organisations have been funded in areas with higher concentrations of households experiencing one or more societal inequalities.**

Leveraging further investment

Many projects continued after the University-funded period, for example:

"...did you notice that from the wee seed of the community grant back in 2018 our 180 service is still going strong (and more in demand than ever due to these challenging times!)" Carol Flack, Mayfield and Easthouses Youth 2000 project
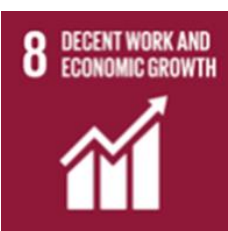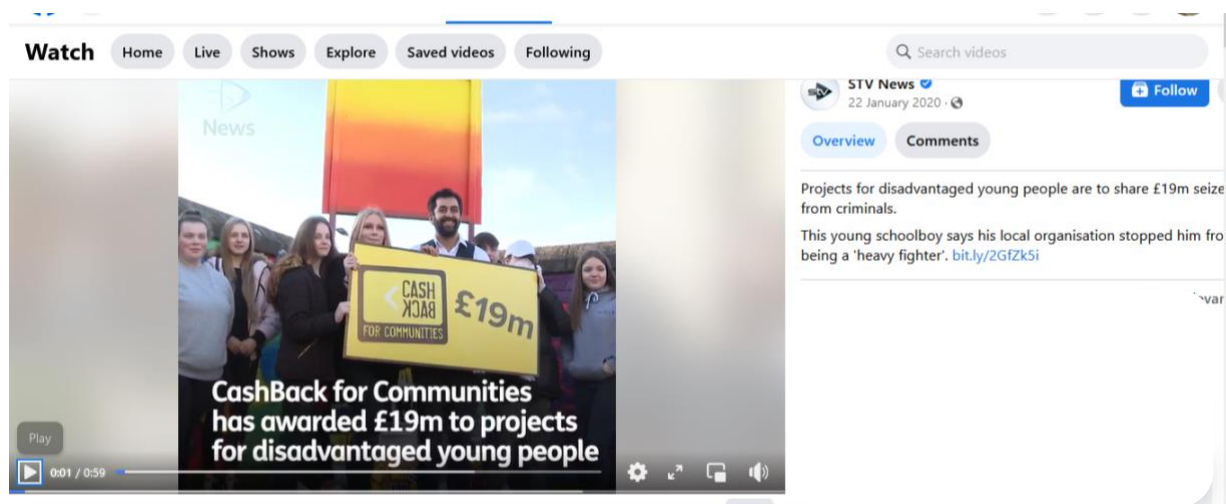

Then-Justice secretary Humza Yousaf visiting Youth 2000's 180 service in January 2020. The service was piloted in 2018 with support from the very first community grant awarded by the University.

The data created, relationships built or even the attachment of the University's name helped organisations **leverage further funding or support** after the University-funded period ended.

"We had established the need for a service such as this, but hadn't yet secured funding. To have Edinburgh University on board from early on acted as leverage for significant funding from a number of different supporters and we are extremely grateful for the University's early adoption of this project. Funding has now been secured for the project for the current year YR2 and in part for YR 3." Edinburgh Women's Aid

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Sustainable Development Goals

Sustainable Development Goal	Indicator	Number of projects which helped deliver on this
1 NO POVERTY	1.2 Poverty reduction	44
	1.4.1 Access to basic services	42
	Financial resources mobilised relating to 1. *(i.e. cash value of grants disbursed)*	**£185,241**
3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	3.4: Reduce mortality from non-communicable diseases and promote mental health	**141**
	3.5: Prevent and treat substance abuse	14
4 QUALITY EDUCATION	4.3 Equal access to affordable technical, vocational, and higher education	29
	4.4 skills for financial success (technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship)	29
	4.5 ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable (disabilities, children in vulnerable situations, gender gap)	**65**
	4.6 Universal literacy and numeracy	5
8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	8.6 Promote youth employment, education and training	44
10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	10.1 reduce income inequalities	35
	10.2 empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status	**116**
	11.1 Safe and affordable housing	6

	11.2: Affordable and sustainable transport systems (special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons)	1
	11.6 Reduce the environmental impacts of cities	23
	11.7 provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces	**44**
	13.3 Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning	21
	15.2: End deforestation and restore degraded forests	2
	15.3: combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil	1
	15.5: reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity, reduce urbanisation	6
	15.a financial resources mobilised to help with 15 *(i.e. cash value of grants disbursed)*	£12,377
	17.17 Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships	4

 Table 1: How community grant projects have contributed to achieving UN Sustainable Development Goals (Oct 2017- Feb 2023)

13 projects that performed extremely well, hitting 7-10 indicators.

Current status

The community grant scheme has **funding** of £55,000 and staff time to administer it **secured for the foreseeable future.** The adaptability shown by funders during the Covid-19 pandemic, including that of the University, has expedited third-sector conversations about **fair** and **flexible funding**.

The adoption of **Sustainable Development Goals** as a framework for assessing social and sustainability value is **growing** in the higher education and other sectors. Interest in the **civic purpose of UK universities** is renewing thanks to bodies like the recently-formed Civic University Network. Planning for the University of Edinburgh's community strategy ('Community Plan') after the current one expires in 2025 is already being considered, with experience pointing to a more **outcomes-focussed approach** for the next iteration, reinforced by a strategic civic partnerships.

Background

The community grant scheme was launched in 2017 by two University of Edinburgh departments as part of the initial offering under its then-new community brand 'Edinburgh Local'. The scheme has always been successful in disbursing well in excess of its target budget each year: £**50-55,000**, which has, in practice, been roughly **doubled** each year to around **£100,000** and **sometimes more**. Cash disbursed has been the key performance indicator set for the scheme so far. Feedback from peers and the curiosity of the colleagues working on the scheme has led to this evaluation's more qualitative and **holistic analysis** of the nature and outcomes of projects funded. Feedback from grantees, best practice recommendations from umbrella bodies and advances in IT system available to the team working on the scheme have created an **opportunity to review the scheme's operations**.

Introduction

This report summarises the findings of an evaluation of the University of Edinburgh's community grant scheme. The purposes of the evaluation have been both **formative** and **summative**. Comparison of the scheme against recognised best practice and other similar schemes has been undertaken and processes have been reviewed for efficiency. Holistic analysis of the **impact** of all grant funding awarded to date has also been carried out; this includes impact beyond the grant-funded period. Findings are summarised, including where the scheme is performing well, and **recommendations for possible future changes** and/or improvements to the scheme are made.

This evaluation has been carried out by members of the University's Community Team who have, in turn, liaised with **internal** and **external stakeholders.** The evaluation process began in earnest in summer 2022, concluding in spring 2023. The intention is to share this summary report publicly with individuals and organisations who could find it useful.

Why evaluate? Why now? Why this scope?

- **Success criteria for the scheme** were kept broad when it was launched. There is now a need to identify and formalise more specified outcomes and associated indicators for the scheme, and a suitable process for monitoring and evaluating these.
- Some members of the Community Team had been keen to review the scheme's operations from a perspective of **funding best practice**, inspired by sessions on best practice in funding third sector organisations that have been part of the past few SCVO Gathering conferences.
- Now that new computing systems are available, it has also been recognised that the scheme could be improved from an **internal efficiency** perspective. This will ensure that the University continues to get **maximum return versus investment**.
- When the community grant scheme has been put forward for external awards (notably, EAUC Green Gown Awards), consistent feedback from judges is that they would like more information about what difference the grant funding has made. This has sparked interest in the **longer-term impact of the scheme**.

- In late 2022, it was decided that the community grant scheme would be the University's pilot metric in its attempt to **evaluate the social impact of the University**. Various summative findings and data sets prepared as part of the scheme evaluation will feed into work on this metric.

Evaluation process ethos

A priority throughout the evaluation process has been to **respect the time of our community grantees**. Additional new data collection has been deliberately limited to the five case studies included in this report. Community grantees already submit rich final reports and feed back to the Community Team informally through ongoing communication; both have been made full use of in this evaluation. Given the **acknowledged imbalanced power dynamic** that can exist even between a funding administrator (not even decision maker) and those seeking funding, we were concerned that grantees would feel obliged to attend any events or interviews if asked, even if these activities would not directly benefit them. Care has also been taken to **avoid over-consulting** peers, recognising that there is already much published best practice guidance and knowledge accumulated by members of the Community Team over a number of years.

Vital statistics (autumn 2017-spring 2023)

- Total cash awarded: **£555,726** (cp. ~£275,000 publicly committed to awarding during this period)
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Impact of projects during University-funded period

A challenge in evaluating the impact of the scheme is that **success criteria** were deliberately left open when the scheme was founded, the commitment to disbursing £50,000 annum being the sole specific one. Given that now **over 200 projects** have been funded, a tighter framework was required to enable an understanding of the scheme's holistic impact to date. More specific outcomes and indicators from various sources were considered: Scotland's National Outcomes; the criteria that were to be agreed for the University's overarching social impact evaluation; the priorities identified for the University's Social Impact Pledges; the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals ('UN SDGs')**. The final source, UN SDGs, were chosen as they seemed the most **future-proof**, are **already embedded** in University governance and reporting, appear to allow **easy re-analysis** for reporting in other areas (e.g. University progress on the recommendations of the Edinburgh Poverty Commission), and seem to be being adopted for social impact reporting **outside the higher education sector** also (conversation with Social Audit Network in November 2022).

How projects contributed to United Nations Sustainable Development Goals ('UN SDGs')

Rather than analysing funded projects against the full 17 UN SDGs, a selection were chosen that seemed most pertinent to the scheme's broadly defined social focus. The SDGs themselves are still very broad – 'SDG/rainbow washing' is a risk – so, while recognising they are not uncontroversial, we additionally selected some of the **indicators** associated with each SDG where these seemed **relevant in the local Scottish context**. We based our analysis on end-of-grant reports submitted by past grantees, a total of **157 final reports**. Where reports were absent (usually because a project is still in progress), the application form was consulted. We cannot say for sure what was achieved with projects without a report, but, from experience, it is very uncommon for a project to fundamentally change direction without the Community Team being made aware of it (a condition of funding is applicants tell us) and the scale of achievement (e.g. how many people benefitted) is not relevant for this high-level analysis. 56 applications were analysed. From the full data set of **projects funded to date**, projects delivered on UN SDGs can be seen in table 1 on page 7.

There were four projects which did not deliver on any of the SDG indicators selected. Anecdotally, decisions to fund these by the panel were not unequivocal. This suggests that the indicators and SDGs chosen provide an explicit framework for what panel members have been intuitively assuming a more specific purposes of the scheme.

A higher number of projects than might be expected – 44 – hit indicator number *11.7 Provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces*. This may be a reflection both of the themed round of 'Green' micro-grants in light of **COP26** and the impact of **Covid-19 restrictions** on indoor delivery.

There were **13 projects that performed extremely well**, hitting 7-10 indicators. These were:

Project name	Organisation
More Than Food: Tackling Root Causes of Poverty	Edinburgh Food Project
Pop-In Community Cafe	North Edinburgh Arts (NEA)
Shaping Your Future	People Know How
Plan Bee	Youth Vision
Taking the first steps	Cyrenians
Tackling Mental Health Inequalities	St Mary's Cathedral Workshop Ltd
Give it a Go	About Youth
INC U	Edinburgh City Youth Café (6VT)
More than Meals on Wheels	Goodtrees Neighbourhood Centre
The Wee Kitchen	Wee Haven Youth Project
Youth Vision Community Sensory Garden	Youth Vision

Growing All Year Round in Winchburgh	Winchburgh Community Growing Group
Summer Holiday Club for School Children in Jedburgh Community	Jedburgh Out of School Club
Drop in Provision for young people at 8-18	Wester Hailes Youth Agency

Table 2: Projects which contributed to 7-19 SDG indicators

North Edinburgh Arts Pop-in Community Café project with staff and volunteers

This SDG analysis needs to be considered alongside other data to establish the depth of impact achieved, but it is helpful in terms of identifying **where the scheme is making a difference**. It also provides a more concrete steer for applicants on what is meant by 'positive social impact'. Our recommendation is to include the above SDG indicators in grantee application and reporting materials in future. This will make it clearer to applicants what we're looking for and will allow **ongoing routine monitoring.**

How many individuals directly benefitted from projects

Our current *conservative* estimate is that 26,372 individuals living in Edinburgh, the Lothians, Fife or Scottish Borders have directly benefitted from community grant projects to date.

The monitoring of numbers of people benefitting from funded projects **varies in rigour** among funded projects. Some projects haven't recorded this at all; others have only recorded participants (which could be the same person coming repeatedly); some have very accurate figures but flag that they suspect others (e.g. family of a beneficiary) also benefitted; some provide rough estimates; in some cases, it's not clear from the final report whether individuals or participants are being reported. The number of individuals who benefitted is, therefore, only the **roughest indicator of the reach** of the scheme's positive impact. Our figure includes volunteers where they have obviously benefitted from the project too (e.g. provided them with training). Households are only counted as a single person unless numbers are given.

It isn't feasible, and wouldn't be reasonable, to ask community grantees how many people **indirectly** benefitted from their projects (e.g. the child of a mother who receives mental health support, and then the child's their school teachers and fellow pupils when the child requires less additional support for learning). We can, though, reasonably assume that the **benefits of grant funding reach well beyond the 26,000 individuals** counted here.

On the basis that it could help community grantees to make the case for further funding from elsewhere, <u>we recommend that applicants are, in future, asked how many people they think will benefit from their project</u>. Asking this at application stage helps ensure applicants monitor this while the project happens

 <u>We also recommend asking clearly how many people benefitted from a project in the grant final report</u>, but still give grantees the option to indicate this is an estimate, recognising that exact monitoring is not always practical and/or proportionate.

What changed for project beneficiaries?

Stories of change:

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*"It made her **feel like she is doing okay as a parent** and needs to give herself more credit." (Playbase Scotland, Updating/Relaunching Play-based Early Years Training)*

*"To think that was just a bare patch of grass before we started. Now, fifty wheelbarrow trips to the carpark and back later **I'm completely knackered but it looks brilliant**." (Participant in Jock Tamson's Gairdens' Bountiful Bothy Bed)*

*"He used to tell me I wasn't a real person [...] [The project] **made me see myself in a completely new way**, and also see how my life could be in the future." (Participant in Edinburgh Women's Aid's Working Together)*

*"I have **acknowledged that something I thought hadn't affected me actually has**." (Participant in Art in Healthcare's Arts on Prescription and Art Therapy for Vulnerable Men)*

Art in Healthcare, Room for Art

Evidence of outcomes from Cyrenians' project, Taking the First Steps:

"Visiting a safe vibrant university space enabled our clients to feel a sense of inclusion and more open to considering university as an option potentially available for themselves." (Cyrenians, Taking the First Steps)

"One Cyrenians client had previously studied at University of Edinburgh but had unfortunately not completed her degree due to trauma and ensuing mental health issues. Through keywork support, they were able to meet and discuss career interests at Potterrow and utilising this space contributed to them getting back into University study and taking up a new degree programme." (Cyrenians, Taking the First Steps)

"Another benefit very important to the aims of this project is people who would never have entered student facility (such as Potterrow) actually going back independently for a coffee and using the Wifi and feeling this place is somewhere for them and they are not out of place or feel to self-conscious or anxious to enter. We can report this is happening with some of our previous clients as they move onto further independence with increased awareness and confidence." (Cyrenians, Taking the First Steps)

*"For one of the young people (a 7 year old) it was his **first time in a swimming pool**."
(SCORE Scotland, Be: Longing Arts and Wellbeing Project)*

*"I got in touch with LINKnet and from the first day I was warmly welcomed. I had a chat with of the staff who introduces the befriending program to me and how I can benefit from it to increase my confidence and develop myself. I was paired and met up with my befriender once a week for 2-3 hours. These meetings made a **big change in my development**. Additionally, They offered me a volunteering opportunity and I started as an admin volunteer with them and I **improved my computer skills and my English** as well." (Participant in LINKNet's No More Tears)*

*"Being part of the project was ground breaking for me as I for the first time felt that my artwork was **accepted by people who can relate with my daily lived experience**." (Participant in the Salisbury Centre's Black Lives Matter - 1 year on)*

*"Before I was always worried about my kids and lockdown and virus. Now after I attend class (sic) I feel **relaxed and happier**. I have made some friends and we are sharing recipes for what to cook during Ramadan." (Participant in Amina MWRC's Strengthening Digital Voices)*

*"Jack started to see how his own garden could easily be cleared away and started to spend time on this over a number of weeks. This gave his children a safe space outside to utilise through the summer months as well as some bonding time learning how to garden from their father. During a conversation with the Support Worker whilst working in the garden he opened up **about how much closer this has made him feel towards his children** and that there was some **fun and laughter back in the family home**." (Firstlight Trust, Sowing and Growing)*

About Youth writing about Emma* who took part in their 2020 project, Give it a Go:

Emma (17) left school in April 2020, just as the first national COVID-19 lockdown came into place. Emma was known to us through our youth work groups and had always reached out for help and support when she needed it, especially 2 years ago when she lost her Dad suddenly. She applied for college with our help, but quickly felt like she had made a mistake and did not want to continue and instead felt that she would be better off working.

"I started off the year at college but I really wasn't enjoying it. I didn't know how to tell my mum because I thought she would be really angry if I dropped out. The youth workers helped me to find a way of explaining things to her and letting her know that I wasn't just gonna do nothing and that I would be getting help to look for jobs and that."

Emma received a large amount of one-to-one support to make a CV and look for jobs. When an opportunity came up at a finance institution that her brother already worked at, she jumped at the opportunity and we helped her to make an application and prepare for her interview.

"I was really really nervous about the interview. I'd never done anything like that before. The youth workers helped me get ready for it and also told me it was OK if I felt nervous and just to try and speak clearly and let the person interviewing me know if I was struggling. I was so so happy when I heard I'd got the job!"

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*"It has made me think more – **I am now interested in getting involved in community research**. I have always wondered why there is no worms in my garden."* (Participant in Pilton Community Health Project's Collective Voice)

*"To see my son progress in such a short space of time was incredible and has helped me see that with the right interaction, we can help my son make progress and it **gives me hope**." (Participant in The Yard's Creative Play for Disabled Children)*

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*"One unexpected outcome was children who came to the café on Saturdays, **expressed curiosity and interest** in what was happening and were able to try making corsages using very simple rag techniques." (Bridgend Farmhouse, Skills for Resilience)*

*"Of 53 carers supported by this project, 75% of carers supported reported **an improvement in their economic well-being**. 78% reported an **improvement in their health and well-being** (Reiki and mindfulness attendees). 75% reported an **improvement in their social well-being**." (VOCAL, Caring for Carers in the Community)*

*''**When I am older I want to do this**, I want to teach children how to swim.'' (Participant in Evolution Swim School's Provision of Free-Swimming Lessons to Disadvantaged Children and Young People)*

*"Participants reported **improved mental health**, as well as an improvement in their skillset." (Bare Productions, We Belong)*

*"The 180-service resulted in an **increase in the number of young people accessing our range of services** including drop in's, single sex work and 1:1 services." (Mayfield and Easthouses Youth 2000 Project (Y2K), 180 Pilot Project)*

*"It has been so difficult for the boys. They have **got the bus by them selves for the first time**." (Corstorphine Community Centre, Home work club- English as a second language)*

*"Anecdotal evidence from discussions with the concierge at Cables Wynd House, indicates he sees less playing in corridors and an **increase in the use of the grassy area**." (YMCA Edinburgh Play Project)*

*"The school shutdown caused by the pandemic was hard for MK and during this time he became disinterested in school. When classes at Leith Academy began again, he was frequently absent until he heard the Super Power Agency would once again be working with his class. MK showed up to every workshop over the eight-week period, eager to work with the Super Power Agency staff and volunteers, ready to participate and get involved. His teacher confided in us that the Super Power Agency workshop was the only time he **attended class regularly**. At the end of the workshop, MK had written a **piece over 700 words which he could use for his English portfolio**." (The Super Power Agency, Primary to High School Creative Writing Workshops)*

*"**Children had a present under the tree** which was both fun and practical. **Children more likely to participate in outdoor activities** as they will have warm clothing. **Parents did not have the added emotional and financial stress** Christmas and winter brings."* (West Lothian Financial Inclusion Network, Team North Pole)

*"As one of the tepee's may only be accessed through the tunnel it has allowed the **children to use this as a private space**, where adults are not "watching/surveying" them which is part of the United Nations Rights of the Child (Article 16) […] We recently had children whose houses burnt down and this has given them **a place to feel secure**, when life at home isn't."* (Midlothian Sure Start, Paradykes Family Centre garden development)

*"Parents now have **a network that they did not have before**."* (Barnardo's Scotland, Barnardo's Edinburgh Together ADHD Parenting Groups)

*"Being confined in a wheelchair I've been unable to change light bulbs for years and for someone to be able to **light up bits of my life** was wonderful."* (Beneficiary of Care and repair Edinburgh's Practical Help around Homes of the Elderly)

Still from suite of videos produced by Speech Language Communication Company as part of their University-funded project

"My reading was never very good… I actually prefer looking at a video and these were really good… you can see what happens and it's like real life… it's more normal and not perfect… more like when I try to do something... it never works out right! But it helped me… I stopped the video when I was doing it with my kids… and was able to see where I was going wrong. I got there in the end. And listening to mums who know what it's like always make you feel better."

Participant in Speech Language Communication Company's Click + Connect! Family Video-Learning

"It is no exaggeration to suggest these funds helped provide a life-saving service to people at the height of food insecurity, health risk and public anxiety." (Scran Academy, Community Meal Delivery Partnership)
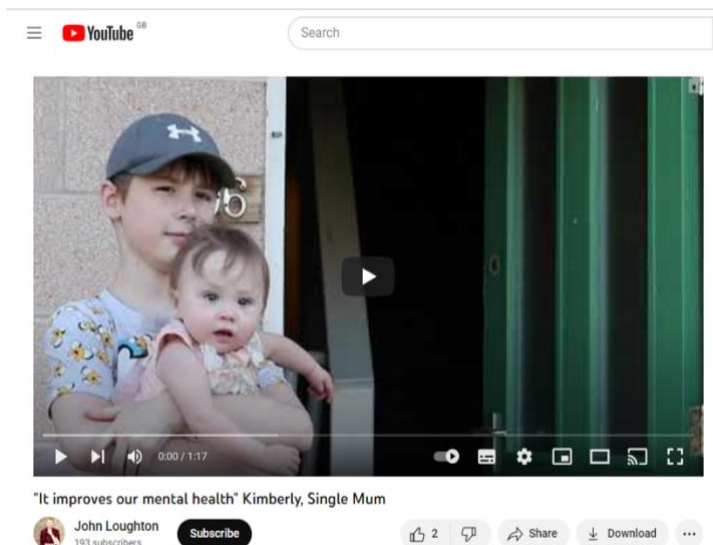
Scran Academy, Community Meal Delivery Partnership

*"One 80 year old found the support so helpful that he **decided to purchase a device**."* (Edinburgh Old Town Development Trust, Digital Buddies)

*"**Secure[d] a bed** for an army veteran sleeping on a mattress on the floor." (The Open Door, Open Door Covid-19 response)*

*"This made us **feel important during difficult times**, Thank You." (Beneficiary of DadsWork's Wellbeing Packs)*

*"Many members had voiced that they didn't feel as professional as other bands when they were in school uniform. They all **take great pride** in their [new] uniform!" (Tynecastle Youth Community Pipe Band)*

Family Fitness case study from SCORE Scotland

Akua* is a single mum with 4 boys aged 10, 8 (Twin brothers) and 4 years all living in temporary accommodation in Edinburgh. Akua's children have been struggling with over weight for a while and following their GP's advice on weight loss that the children needed to stay active in order to stay healthy. However, since lockdown, it has been possible for Akua to keep in touch with the help from telephone calling support from Score-Scotland link worker. In addition, when lockdown was being relaxed, Akua's family was offered 8 one-to-one weekly outdoor fitness sessions delivered by a fitness coach to help her and the children spend time together while participating in physical activities away from their flat and get fresh air. Akua and the children started the fitness programme designed by the fitness coach aimed at increasing participation in physical activity and losing weight in a sustainable fashion which is more likely to lead to longer term success.

Since joining the fitness programme, Akua's family fitness coach has noticed **huge changes in the physical and mental health of the children** as a result of participating in physical activities. They have gained **confidence**, **happy** while participating in 1-2hours of weekly activity and they have **also asked for more physical activities** but the family fitness programme has had limited funds for its continuity. However, Score-Scotland has put in place the means for Akua and her children to access other community health programmes that will help keep the family engaged as additional fitness funds is being sourced.

> *"Before we joined the family fitness programme, my children were unhappy with the way they felt about themselves and I was worried about their health", since joining the fitness programme, they feel a lot happier about themselves and I'm happy with Score-Scotland to give me this great opportunity, I wouldn't have been able to do this on my own and pay for the children because I'm not working and I'm so happy."* (Akua)

> *"I feel much better when I come out" "this is amazing" "I am tired" "when are we playing again?"* (Akua's children)

**Edinburgh Young Carers writing about Euan* who took part in their School Transition Support:**

Euan was identified through our Schools Awareness Work. Euan's father suffers from severe mental health and his sister has autism. Euan was providing a huge amount of emotional care to his mum which was affecting his wellbeing.

Euan was classified as high priority and referred for support with caring, also to reduce isolation and make friendships. He needed to be able to verbalise and express his frustrations with his caring role. It was beginning to manifest its self-harm.

He was supported with 1-1's, groups and any residential breaks. Through a combination of play therapy and a residential break, Euan has made good progress towards being able to verbalise and identify his emotional needs. He is on the waiting list for counselling.

Edinburgh Young Carers worked closely with the family to identify support via social work. We made a referral for family support to social work and the completed an assessment. There have been a couple of supports put in place for mum and sister. Euan is supported by Edinburgh Young Carers as part of the social work plan.

*"90% of participants reported **positive outcomes against SHANARRI indicators** (GIRFEC wellbeing indicators)." (Tinderbox Collective, Youth and Community Engagement*
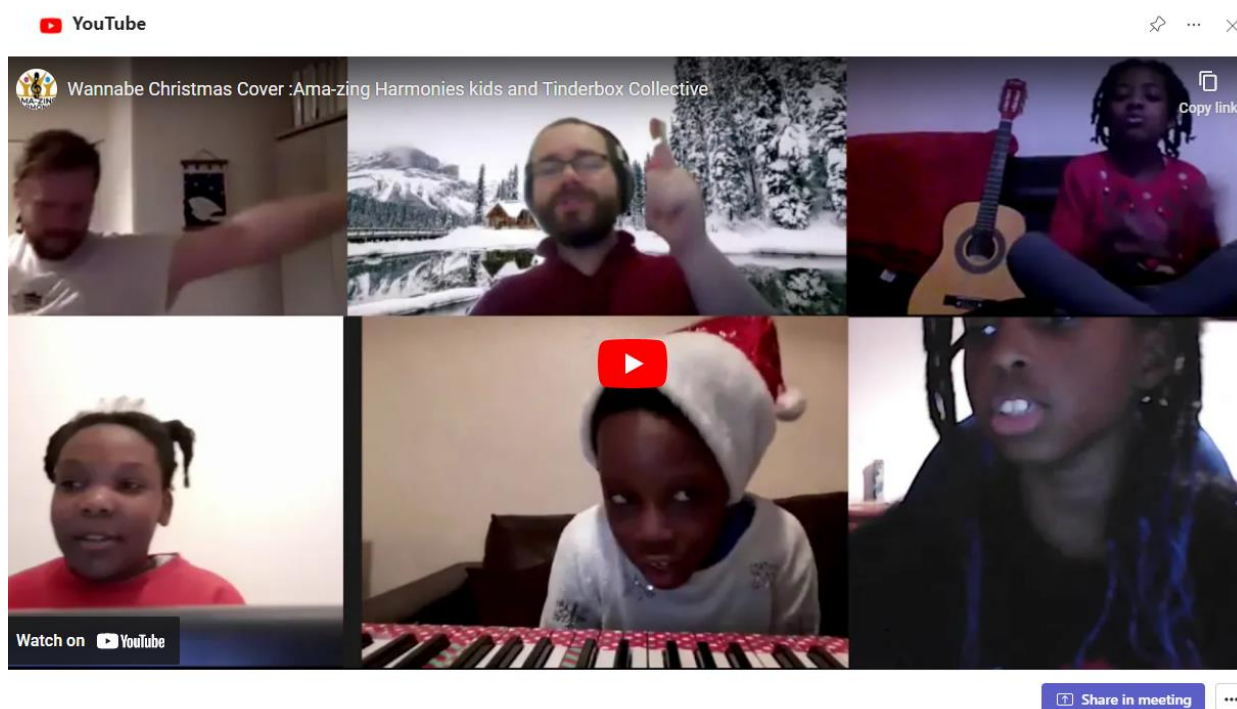
Wannabe Christmas Cover: Ama-zing Harmonies kids and Tinderbox Collective

Partnership with the University

Edinburgh College of Art 2018 graduate, Poppy Stubley, who volunteered in connection with Cyrenians' 2019 University-funded Taking the First Steps project

We were pleased to find that around **one-third** of the data set of 157 end-of-grant reports noted **University staff or students being involved with the delivery of their projects** or, in a small number of cases, becoming involved with **subsequent projects** due to contact made during the University-funded period. (This figure excludes grants awarded to student societies as they inherently have student involvement.) In a handful of cases, the involvement of University staff was on a paid basis covered by the grant (something only ever approved on a case-by-case basis). In most cases, the involvement of staff and students was unpaid. Some involvement directly related to the academic or professional expertise of University staff; in many cases, it was quite general volunteering.

Several grantees report having made contact with a number of University departments and student societies without this bearing fruit. In some cases, they experienced **good communication**. The **support of the Community Team** in trying to make these contacts, even where unsuccessful, is mentioned by at least one grantee.

At least one academic publication has resulted from a community-University partnership funded by the community grant scheme.

The Positive Imaginings project by Rowanbank Environmental Arts and Education involved collaboration with Liz Vander Meer from the University's Department for Social Responsibility and Sustainability throughout. This relationship came about independently.

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Research Article

Tutoring project for children from a refugee community: tutor perspectives

Deborah Holt & Alice Taylor

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In this article

ABSTRACT

Background

Related research

Article by Deborah Holt (Lecturer, Moray House School of Education and Sport) about refugee tutoring project funded by the University's community grant scheme.

The article covers what made the project work from the tutors' perspectives and what support for tutors was needed so that the learners got the most from the project. An article on the refugee families' experience of the project is to follow.

The project was led by Re-Act: Refugee Action Scotland. The University pilot evaluation helped Re-Act to secure funding for a further 2 years.

"Excellent impact from the community grant fund" (Deborah Holt)

Positive Imaginings, Rowanbank Environmental Arts and Education

Building partnerships and relationships with the University has been felt to be a challenge of the scheme by those involved. Connecting with the right people at the right time on an area of shared interest is hard even if, like the Community Team (who has provided support to applicants) you know the University well. The grant review panel also find this criterion hard to assess: should it be based on the likelihood of the partnership happening during the project, or is it enough for applicants to demonstrate thought put into this?

Legacy of University funding

To determine the longer-term impact of University community grant funding, we have made best use of **information already reported** to us and created a small set of new case studies.

Legacy case studies

We followed up with a **small representative sample** of community grantee organisations whose projects were already complete. Some of these projects had taken place recently; others were from the early stages of the scheme. We contacted organisations in a mix of regions and with different types of project beneficiary groups. The aim was to establish what happened after University ended, although we also learned more about the impacts during the University-funded period. We obtained **5 case studies** from 10 organisations targeted.

Bridgend Farmhouse

Bridgend Farmhouse is a community-owned centre, located in south Edinburgh. This charitable organisation operates out of a renovated farmhouse and is an inclusive space for locals to learn, work and strengthen community involvement. Their goal is to help people live more happily and healthily by addressing social inequalities whilst contributing to local learning and improving surrounding green spaces.

Funding History

Since launching in 2017, Bridgend Farmhouse has successfully received **four rounds of University community grant funding**. This includes two substantive grants, one Covid-19 micro-grant and one regular micro-grant. Funded projects included: delivering circular economy upcycling workshops, reducing social isolation during the Covid-19 pandemic, launching a bike hub, and building an eco-Bothy to serve as a sustainable community-owned centre for learning, eating and exercise.

Project Impacts

(2017) Bridgend Farmhouse Skills for Resilience: This project trained 16 volunteers to facilitate furniture upcycling workshops, which are **now on regular offer at the centre**.

Originally focusing on upcycling furniture, this project has highlighted strong community interest in developing sustainable and tactile skillsets. Through project facilitators, the workshops **went beyond original aims** by addressing both health inequalities and the natural environment by raising awareness in an inclusive space. The workshops **continue to provide** peer support and promote good mental health and wellbeing to participants in a safe space for all to learn and grow. Since the Skills for Resilience project began, several new workshops have been developed based on community hobbies, including a jam and chutney workshop.

> *"The project allowed us to gain new volunteers, their input and ideas. Perhaps equally crucial, the project has made the concepts of sustainability more accessible; more transparent and initiated discussions, which might otherwise not have taken place. We have been able to use the project as a springboard to complementary projects"* (Bridgend Farmhouse)

Bridgend Farmhouse Skills for Resilience project (2017-)

(2019) Bothy Build: An Eco-Bothy was designed and built by more than 80 volunteers between 2015 and 2022, using traditional and ecological techniques. The eco-Bothy was constructed from sustainable materials, with aims to create greater engagement with the outdoors and the environment.

The **newly finished Eco-Bothy** provides Bridgend Farmhouse with added capacity to grow and develop projects which have a positive impact on the community. The space is designed to create a social space for community members of all ages, enabling them to develop confidence outdoors and engage with nature at night. The bothy is also being used to run weekend courses in the local woodlands, bringing Scottish bothy culture to the city.

> *"We [now] have an enclosed natural sensory play garden which will offer [children in the community] a safe space to explore... The Eco-Bothy is something new that will **benefit people for many years to come**."* (Bridgend Farmhouse)

Bridgend Farmhouse Eco-Bothy (2019-)

(2020) South Edinburgh Mutual Support (Covid-19): This project was a food delivery service for local vulnerable people during the Covid-19 pandemic. The project delivered over **75,000 meals** from April – July 2020 and reduced social isolation for both volunteers and recipients.

Beyond initial aims, the project has reinforced the importance of creating social connections over a meal. Bridgend Farmhouse currently runs several community food projects, including community cooking, catering and training sessions, as well as providing skills development to support disadvantaged young people (aged 16 to 25) and socially isolated adults.

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*"This project resulted in creating new community partnerships, reached new volunteers and has led to a **sustained community engagement** at the Farmhouse."*
(Bridgend Farmhouse)

South Edinburgh Mutual Support (2020-)

(2020) Bothy Bike Hub (Micro-Grant): Funding supported a Bike Hub during Covid-19 to help people in the local community get out more using active travel. The hub included free bike hire to key workers, a free bike mechanic service for key workers and people in need, as well as providing free or low-cost refurbished bikes locals on low income.

This project has **continued to develop and grow** since initial funding was provided. Volunteers and staff have been upskilled to repair bikes, enabling locals to trade in and refurbish used bikes, promoting a culture of circular economy and local sustainability. Apart from trade-ins and fixer-uppers, the hub continues to have high demand, selling 5-6 bikes a week to locals.

The hub has also enabled Bridgend to team up with social enterprise 'A wee pedal'. Their collaboration promotes active and sustainable travel, providing lessons in cycling and family-led tours of Edinburgh. The success of the Bothy Bike Hub has grown out of initial Micro-Grant funding and due to sustained interest and engagement, the hub will be expanding to a new building soon.

"We [have] sustained the benefits of the project as we've maintained our reach within the community through the project. As part of this project and others, we have **developed our own skills** *and experience to deliver services that relate to cycling and bike maintenance." (Bridgend Farmhouse)*

Conclusion

Each funded project under the Community Grants Scheme **met or exceeded** original application aims and have by and large **grown into permanent fixtures within the centre**, enhancing sustained community engagement and reach at Bridgend Farmhouse.

Dr Bell's Family Centre

Dr Bell's Family Centre aims to be a welcoming place where families with young children in Leith can get encouragement, support and advice in a relaxed atmosphere. Their services are for everyone, focusing on the most disadvantaged, ensuring families can access the services without stigma. Their crèche facility is key to the success of the Centre. It allows parents to attend groups and appointments, supports families facing challenging circumstances through the provision of regular crèche spaces and offers a drop-in facility for all local families.

Funding History

Dr Bell's Family Centre has successfully received two rounds of grant funding under the community grant scheme. This includes one substantive grant and one Covid-19 micro-grant. Funded projects include a mindfulness wild swimming programme and an activity-based programme to reduce social isolation during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Project Impacts

(2019) Dr Bell's Mindfulness Dip: The Mindfulness Dip programme supports families with their mental health and wellbeing through group wild swimming. Five free crèche places were provided for any children aged 0-5 for the duration of the two-hour sessions. Parents were able to fully relax and benefit from some rare time for themselves, safe in the knowledge that their children were being cared for by qualified childcare professionals. Time was provided after the dip for hot drinks and a fire, allowing opportunities for reflection, discussion, mindfulness, yoga, affirmation and intention setting, and mutual support.

Following **extremely positive feedback** from the participants, Dr Bell's Family Centre has **continued to run the group even after the funding expired.** They have since been granted an additional 6 months' funding to operate the Mindfulness Dip until the end of 2022 with **aims to make it a permanent fixture**.

*"Thanks to funding from the University of Edinburgh's Local Community Grants Scheme, we have been able take our Mindfulness Dip group **from its Pilot stage in 2021 to a regular weekly group** throughout 2022. Our wild swimming group has given us a unique opportunity to develop our methods for supporting parental mental health and wellbeing through the natural environment we are lucky enough to have on our doorstep. We have had excellent feedback from participants, including how invigorated, relaxed and proud they feel after taking to the cold Edinburgh seas. After swimming we sit around a fire with a hot drink and snacks and reflect on how we felt about the experience. We write our thoughts and feelings in journals, as well as intentions and positive affirmations to prepare for the week ahead. We also invite guest speakers to offer insight on topics such as meditation, healthy eating, yoga, and sea safety."* (Dr Bell's)

Mindfulness Dip (2019-)

Mindfulness Dip (2019-)

<u>(2020) Keeping Connected (Covid-19):</u> This project, designed to improve mental health and increase the sense of community, provided wraparound support for parents who were lonely and isolated during the first lockdown. Materials such as mindfulness packs, yoga mats, art packs and food boxes were delivered to participating families leading to an improvement in mental health of parents, children they work with (under 5s), partners and older siblings.

This project has affirmed strong community interest in each activity, and as a result **the activities have continued beyond funding – now offered in person**. The centre has continued with food deliveries as well as mindfulness packs, and offer a free weekly cooking session and community lunch.

> *"For families with children under 5 living in Leith, the Keeping Connected programme has been a lifeline. We know this because parents have let us know how important it has been to them to have routine, structure and something to look forward to each week. Parents have told us how taking a moment to themselves whilst children were napping to participate in yoga sessions or work through mindfulness packs supported their mental health." (Dr Bell's)*

Keeping Connected (2020-)

Conclusion

Both funded projects under the community grants scheme have sustained a **shelf life beyond original grant funding**, ensuring that Dr Bell's Family Centre can continue to provide support and services to families in the local area.

Groundswell Scotland

Groundswell Scotland is a surf therapy non-profit organisation for trauma recovery. They facilitate programmes designed to improve and develop self-regulation, embodiment practices and healing tools through surfing's connection to nature, community and self. They provide the opportunity for local women to come together around the ocean with the aim of promoting good health and wellbeing. Surf Therapy is a celebration of local coasts, natural environment, community as well as encouraging more women to experience the joy of surfing and other mindful sports whatever their background or experience.

Funding History

Groundswell has successfully received one round of substantive grant funding under the Community Grants scheme. The project provided surf therapy for participants from diverse, vulnerable or disadvantaged backgrounds, who would not normally be able to access this type of support. The project enabled increased educational and conservation awareness of the positive physical and mental benefits of surfing, sport and activity among participants.

Project Impacts

(2021) LGBTQ+ Surf Therapy Programme: This programme provides a safe space for individuals to find their healing, power and belonging in nature through surf therapy. Designed to support to self-identifying trans-women and non-binary people who have experienced disproportionate challenges and difficulties as a result of their identity, Surf Therapy at Groundswell provides a safe space. The programme offers tools for sustainable trauma recovery to support holistic and sustainable healing of participants.

With a core focus on wellbeing, experienced members of staff facilitated development that resulted in participants pursuing volunteering, gaining employment, reducing prescribed drugs use, and leading more active and fulfilled lives.

The programme continues to run beyond initial grant funding and has led to partnership with African Caribbean Society Scotland to run a **BME inclusive programme**. Groundswell continues to seek resources and funding to sustain Surf Therapy; they are currently working with Queen Margaret University to broaden their range of offerings. Groundswell hopes to establish meaningful long-term partnerships and sustainable inclusion within their surf therapy and community programmes.

"There was always a way of making sense of whatever was in my head by the way the sea was, whether it was calmer today and sometimes you need that or realising that you can, the crazy day when the waves are all massive and crashing and smacking in the face and knocking you off the board but that's okay. And you can maybe find peace out the back or whatever was going on, it could relate to the ocean and sort of answer the questions in my head somehow or another." (Project participant)

"Life has huge highs and lows which you can learn to accept them, like the waves in the sea, 'just surf it.' We get up and we go again. It's like you can surf and you can learn to deal with it, you know? Dealing with the wipe out and the only way to deal with it, was to relax." (Project participant)

LGBTQ+ Surf Therapy (2021-)

Conclusion

Groundswell has successfully provided Surf Therapy to participants experiencing disproportionate challenges and difficulties as a result of their identity. The programme has been effective and well received that **Groundswell continues to run it beyond initial funding**. They are **working with additional funders** to sustain the project.

West Lothian Financial Inclusion Network

West Lothian Financial Inclusion Network ('WLFIN') is a SCIO registered charity which aims to ensure that all West Lothian residents are aware of their financial choices and promotes access to financial advice, financial products and other services, particularly for the most excluded social groups.

Funding History

WLFIN has successfully received **five rounds of grant funding** under the University's community grant scheme. This includes one substantive grant, and four micro-grants including the Covid-19 and Green micro-grant themed rounds of funding. All funded projects supported children and families experiencing food poverty, social isolation and financial instability by providing meals, winter essentials and inclusive means of shopping affordably.

Project Impacts

(2020) Breakfast Bundle (Covid-19 micro-grant): With the levels of child poverty rising higher than average in West Lothian, ensuring that young people have access to breakfast is more important than ever. This project aimed to provide 250 breakfast bundles during the school holiday, ensuring that vulnerable children did not go hungry.

In total, WLFIN exceeded the project aims by delivering 280 breakfast bundles, equating to **1,400 meals**. As an outcome of this project, WLFIN also **developed links with the local food network and local retailers**, providing access to additional breakfast bundles beyond the initial scope of the project. A further 50 breakfast bundles were delivered during October half term, providing essential support to those in need.

"By utilising the local food network and retailers, we will continue to deliver Breakfast bundles during school holidays." (WLFIN)

"This service has been appreciated gave my child a routine during lockdown."
(Project beneficiary)

(2021) Children's Essential Winter Warmers: To ensure the children from vulnerable families are warm during winter, this project aimed to provide winter essentials such as jackets, hats and gloves for young people within families that were struggling with changing household budgets. This issue was identified by local community advisors, with local statistics indicating that about 200 children needed this support.

The project exceeded the initial target of supplying 500 children with winter warmers, supporting **908 children**. This was due to a greater need than calculated, and with the support of the community grant as well **as further community partnerships**, this was possible.

The project **reduced financial stress** on families by reducing the need to choose between clothing, heat or food costs. It also resulted in the **reduction of social isolation** by ensuring young children were able to attend school in suitable clothing for the season. By supplying winter essentials, the project was also able to minimise negative impacts on health by ensuring that warm clothing would reduce vulnerability to winter illnesses, especially during an upsurge of Covid and Flu in the colder winter months.

> *"...By supplying the winter warmers, we were able to ensure that children were not isolated, that they had the required winter essentials [so] they could participate in all activities [such as] shopping, going to school etc. This relieved the stress on the parents of vulnerable families." (WLFIN)*

(2021) Pennies Pantry (Green micro-grants): This project aimed to ensure local residents of Stoneyburn had **dignified access to food** while reducing items going to landfill by providing the option to purchase food at reduced prices. The food on offer through this project was supplied by local supermarket distribution centres with a key message: love food, not waste. This in-date and perfectly edible food **would have been directed to landfill if it weren't for WLFIN** as in most cases the packaging had been damaged in transport.

By promoting and encouraging use of Pennies Pantry, WLFIN aimed to reduce stress on vulnerable families by offering access to food without being exclusively dependent on foodbanks. The fresh food options also improved access to better nutrition. Utilising Pennies Pantry allowed parents the choice where to spend their disposable income rather than having to make the difficult choice between food or heat. Over **115 meals** were supplied in the last few weeks during summer holiday, and **WLFIN continues to seek funding to provide continued support** during the winter period.

During Pantry visits, volunteers were on hand to deliver welfare and benefit advice, discuss food options and provide guidance on budgeting. The project led to **several new participants engaging with WLFIN** and fresh food being diverted from landfill.

(2021) Team North Pole (Micro-grants): Many vulnerable families and those adversely affected by Covid with children needed a helping hand at Christmas. Originally aiming to supply 500 shoeboxes, each wrapped in Christmas paper and filled with small Christmas essentials, the project was able to supply nearly double this at a total of **908 boxes**. The shoebox, wrapped in decorative Christmas paper, included new items such as pyjamas, socks, toiletries, small toys and sweeties, providing a balance of practical items as well as festive treats. The project was run in tandem with the Winter Warmers offer.

The project helped alleviate the stress for the parents who were concerned about meeting their essential outgoings and therefore did not have left over money to be able to provide a gift for their children. It also helped to ensure that children had a gift to open on Christmas morning.

Team North Pole (2021-)

(2022) Team North Pole 2022 (Micro-grants): Due to the outstanding success of Team North Pole 2021, WLFIN successfully returned for funding for an adapted project to support a wider population, providing **1,000 Christmas shoeboxes** to local vulnerable children whose families that been adversely affected by the pandemic and rapidly rising fuel and housing costs. These boxes were again filled with all new items such as winter essentials, toiletries and festive treats. **Team North Pole has become an important form of support for vulnerable families in the winter months** and provides a sense of normalcy to the festive season shopping experience.

Team North Pole (2021-)

Conclusion

Through **regular community consultation**, West Lothian Financial Inclusion Network has been able to **identify gaps for service provision** and provide **sustained support** to vulnerable families. The projects funded through the community grant scheme have **evolved over time** and are closely linked to one another, ensuring that families in need are able to access resources with dignity and autonomy.

These projects not only provide necessary physical resources to families, but also provide essential **budgeting and financial support** for those who may not normally have access.

Youth Vision

Youth Vision is a charity that works with young people from south-west Edinburgh that are struggling with formal education or are excluded from school, and are not engaged in training or employment ('NEET'). The organisation offers a range of nature-based informal education services that aim to develop confidence and self-esteem to support a healthy transition to adulthood and more positive destinations.

Funding History

Youth Vision has successfully received **two rounds** of substantive grant funding under the community grant scheme. Funded projects included a sustainable and natural beekeeping project that corresponded with youth development activities, and a community sensory garden to provide respite for the centre's neurodiverse young people.

Project Impacts

(2018) Plan Bee: This project expanded learning and development opportunities for Youth Vision's participants by developing, implementing and sustaining a natural beekeeping environment. Facilitating the development of social and technical skills as well as environmental understanding, 46 young people from 13-24 years old and volunteers of all ages contributed to the project, increasing their quantifiable experience.

Participants enhanced their skill set in various ways such as the ability to identify species of wild-flowers and fruit bushes that are popular with local bee populations, research and develop simple designs for a natural beehive, and share their learnings with community members during open days. Environmental benefits were another positive consequence of the project, observed through an increase in the local bee population. **This continually benefits the local community with an inspiring example of sustainable and natural beekeeping in action.**

The project also enabled the creation of an education corner within the Youth Vision cottage where several resources are available to the public, from beekeeping information to plant growing guidance. The library is a useful for Youth Vision participants as well as the wider local community who may be interested in starting their own growing projects. Youth Vision plans to **build new hives** and to conserve with hopes of **expanding their bee population naturally**.

> *"Physical benefits [of the project] included manual work in remote environments, safe tool use, risk assessments and following procedures. Social benefits included being part of the Youth Vision community, sharing skills and knowledge with each other and the wider community. Lastly, emotional benefits included improving metal wellbeing through connection with nature, completion of a project and understanding of sustainability and environmental issues." (Youth Vision)*

Plan Bee (2018-)

<u>(2022) Youth Vision Community Sensory Garden:</u> This recently-funded project enabled the creation of a calming garden designed around the sensory needs of Youth Vision's vulnerable and neurodiverse young people, as well as those experiencing mental health challenges. The garden aimed to be a safe space primarily for the centre's young people, but also for volunteers and the wider Youth Vision community to take time out to readjust.

Each seated area included a different sensory experience:

- **Sound:** Wind affected plants, wind chimes and gravel underfoot
- **Smell**: Scented plants, lavender, herbs, pollinating flowers
- **Taste:** Edible plants and fruit like strawberries and raspberries
- **Sight**: Colourful native plants attracting insects
- **Touch**: Different textured plants and seating

This collaborative project has engaged young people and members of the community to build the garden, utilising modern and traditional skills where participants can pass on to others in a practical way. Further, the project provides community inclusion through on-going horticultural maintenance. Youth Vision hopes that the garden will deliver **long-term therapeutic benefits** to young people, community volunteers and the wider Youth Vision community in a safe and calm space within the most naturally beautiful surroundings.

Youth Vision Community Sensory Garden (2022-)

**Youth Vision Community Sensory Garden (2022-)**

Conclusion

Both funded projects carried out by Youth Vision have enabled the **continued evolution of the centre** and created **sustained community connections** through building up practical skill sets for participants.

What happened next for other projects?

Based on analysis of end-of-grant reports, **many grantees planned to continue activities** after the University funding ended, with some giving details of concrete plans for this. For a number of projects, the University funding enabled **proof-of-concept work** to be undertaken that provided evidence to make a case for funding elsewhere.

"...did you notice that from the wee seed of the community grant back in 2018 our 180 service is still going strong (and more in demand than ever due to these challenging times!)" (Carol Flack, Mayfield and Easthouses Youth 2000 project)
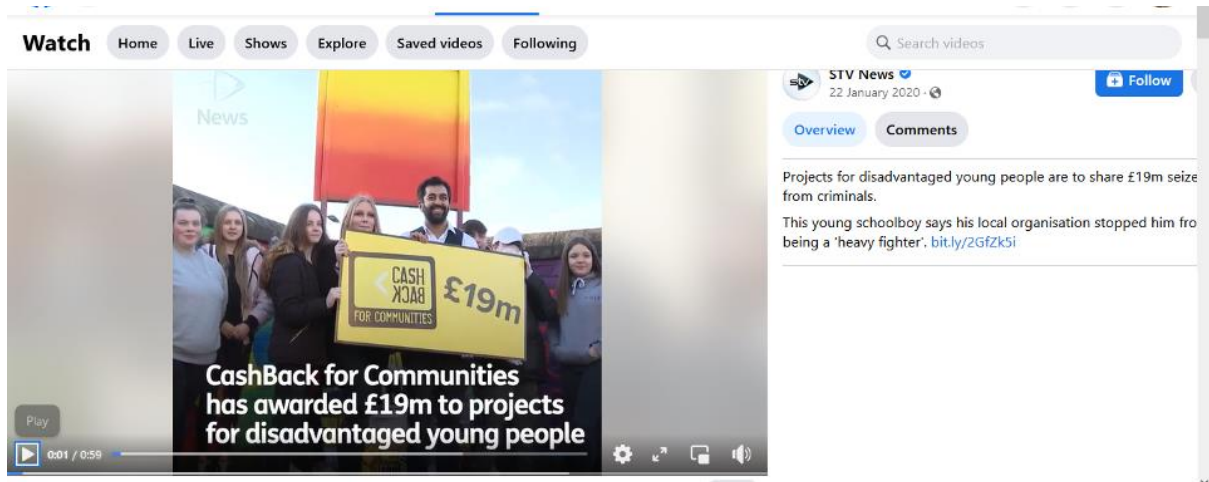
[Then-Justice secretary Humza Yousaf visiting Youth 2000's 180 service in January 2020.](#) **The service was piloted in 2018 with support from the very first community grant awarded by the University**

Following the Scottish Government's route map out of lockdown, at the beginning of August Y2K was able to launch a new outreach support initiative which had been planned pre-Covid, called '180+'.

[A development of Youth 2000's original 180 service launched after the first Covid-19 lockdown](#). **Pictured are (Leona Dowdeswell (youth worker), Nina Galloway (Y2K+ Project Lead), Lyndsey Ritchie (Youth Work Coordinator)**

Funders and supporters that grantees have progressed to include:
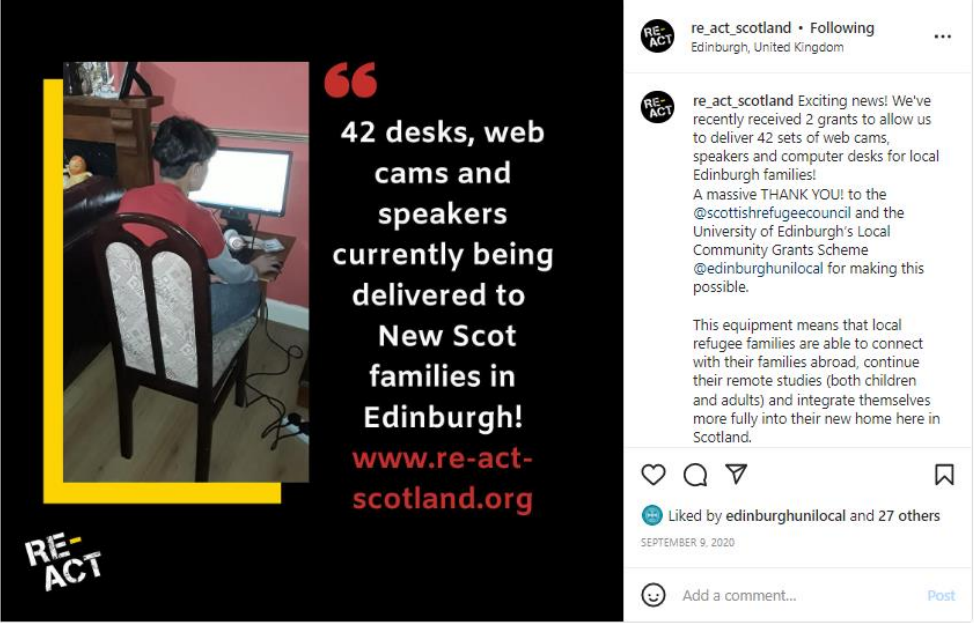
- Bank of Scotland Foundation and REACH Programme
- BEMIS
- Big Lottery
- City of Edinburgh Council
- Comic Relief
- Corra Foundation
- Creative Scotland
- Foundation for Mental Health
- Henry Smith Improving Lives Fund

- Midlothian Council
- National Lottery Community Fund
- Ponton House Trust
- Robertson Trust
- Scotrail
- Scottish Children's Lottery
- Scottish Government
- Scottish Refugee Council
- Thrive Edinburgh

Many of these applications were reported to have been successful at the time the final reports were submitted. One grantee reported that having the University's name attached to their project had been helpful in **leveraging further funding**.

We had established the need for a service such as this, but hadn't yet secured funding. To have Edinburgh University on board from early on acted as leverage for significant funding from a number of different supporters and we are extremely grateful for the University's early adoption of this project. Funding has now been secured for the project for the current year YR2 and in part from YR 3. (Edinburgh Womens' Aid)

Other projects had some plans for **financial self-sustainability**. For example, Edinburgh Community Yoga's social enterprise model was going to be one source of funding to continue the chair yoga for people with dementia that it piloted with the help of University funding.

In some cases, University funding enabled organisations to build links with **suppliers of goods, members of public keen to donate** or **communities of volunteers** which meant that the project could continue to run without additional funding. Some funded projects were for the purchase of **equipment** that was always intended to be used far beyond the end of the project. A wooden tepee for outdoor play for children attending Paradykes Family Centre is one such example.

Re-Act's project to provide local refugee families with IT equipment.
It led to another project funded by and in partnership with the University.

For many organisations, the community grant project was an **initial hook** into their audience. Once beneficiaries has been engaged, they were able to undertake more involved work with them. For example, DadsWork, who provided wellbeing packs to East Lothian families during lockdown, went on to run online cooking classes with these families. In some cases, organisations have successfully obtained **funding from the University for a subsequent project catalysed by initial University funding**. For example, Re-Act's homework project for local refugee families was sparked by an initial project to provide these families with IT equipment for home school; both were funded by the University.

The **enthusiasm of project beneficiaries** themselves has sparked follow-on activity, such as Superpower Agency's schoolchildren beneficiaries wanting to publish poems created as part of a University's funded project.

Continuing activities after projects ended did not always happen, at least not directly. For example, art workshops that Granton:Hub ran for local children were a hit with parents, who wanted more, but the format piloted with University funding was too resource intensive. Another project noted that they needed a fundraising volunteer to help them continue and had not yet managed to recruit one at the time of reporting. Sadly, in a couple of rare cases, organisations shut down during or shortly after their project delivery. Given the number of projects and organisations the University has now funded, we would expect to find instances like this.

What happened next for some of the project beneficiaries?

A small number of onward destinations for project beneficiaries have been learned from end of grant reports:

- **Tinderbox Collective, Youth and Community Engagement:** 15 participants went on to positive destinations.
- **North Edinburgh Arts, Pop-in Community Café:** 2 local participants obtained ongoing employment.
- **Bridgend Farmhouse, Learn as you Build:** 2 volunteers went into jobs in sustainable architecture.
- **Barnardo's Edinburgh Together ADHD Parenting Groups:** Children of families got improved support for learning assistance at school.
- **SCORE Scotland Geoscience project:** Akua* and her children (probably) accessed other community health programmes.
- **Project Esperanza, Self Affirmation through Poetry Workshop:** Participant went on to apply for a course at Edinburgh College.
- **Pilton Community Health Project, Collective Voice:** A group of 10 women moved forward to participate in Wider Horizons, a project run by Social Enterprise Academy in partnership with Pilton Community Health Project and Saheliya. One participant further developed her role as a peer educator.
- **6VT Edinburgh City Youth Café, Keysteps Independent Living Skills (ILS):** 2 participating young people afterwards participated in a holiday club, providing a period of respite for their families.
- **6VT – Edinburgh City Youth Café, INC U:** The majority of those accessing support via Inc U went on to stay connected to 6VT, taking advantage of the wider youth work programme. 1 young person also joined their youth board.
- **EPIC, Edinburgh Girls Project:** "Even though some positive changes were observed over the seven weeks of the Project, the real impact of the Edinburgh Girls Project is likely to be seen later in life." The project helped girls make informed choices about their physical and mental health, with girls then trained up to then mentor others – a ripple effect. "The social connections the participants have made will also increase their likelihood of having a good social support network later in life."
- **Leith Community Crops in Pots, Green Learning:** P7 pupils who were part of the University-funded project were going on to lead a school gardening club.

Because reports are meant to be submitted within one month of a project ending, they are not generally a source of long-term data on project participants. Grantees do not always have the means themselves to follow-up on their project beneficiaries. Because of this, and recognising the time grantees had already spent on their final report for us, we decided not to attempt to follow up with a large number of past grantees about onward destinations of their project beneficiaries.

What do grantees want from the University after their project ends?

Since introducing this as a specific question into the final report form, it has been unusual for grantees not to mention something.

Responses to "Please tell us what further contact with the University, if any, could be beneficial to your organisation or project" ask in final report forms
Volunteers – many organisations mention both staff and student volunteers, for all sorts of roles, including senior roles like board members , specific skills such as business development, finance, charity governance, HR, conservation, food production, fundraising, ground works construction or one-off communications support
Making use of student (undergrad and postgrad) research skills for e.g. mapping, community consultation, evaluation
Uni open days, tours and talks targeted to their audiences, including conversations with current students
Funding information: for projects, both from the University and other funders, and for University attendance
Free venues or other University facilities open to members of the public
Placements or work experience at the University for their audiences
Change to get involved with action research
University students to come on placement or internship to their organisation
Access to University mental health assets, e.g. Mindfulness Chaplain
Getting University staff and students to engage with the support they offer
External audit of their organisation and evaluation of their projects
To offer their services to the University on a paid basis
Using University communications to publicise their activities and organisation
Research collaborations
Access to CPD opportunities, formal or informal, for their staff
For the University staff to use their spaces as bases for research and engagement
Subject-specific specialist academic input (e.g. entomology) or being brought up to speed on the state of the art
Donations of physical goods (e.g. furniture)
Sponsorship
To be added as an agency that helps international students settle locally
Being connected with other organisations (e.g. other community grantees or other local larger charities) who have similar interests
Information about Uni culture and arts activities that could interest their audiences
Access to University archives and collections

**Table 3: What organisations want from the University after their project ends**

"What do communities want?" is a question frequently asked by people trying to engage with communities. We recommend, therefore, that <u>these findings be shared with University colleagues and anyone else who would have an interest</u>. Making use of existing data **avoids re-consulting communities** more than necessary. It's also important to note that, in a few cases, organisations **did not have any specific requests** for the University at the time of reporting.

Given the possibility that the old reporting question was **priming respondents** with certain examples of what the University could offer, we recommend <u>experimenting with a simpler, example-free question</u> in the final report form to see what responses this yields.

Recognition within the sector(s)

In 2022, the community grant scheme was **highly commended** by the **EAUC (Environmental Association of Universities and College) Green Gown Awards**. The Awards are not a total fit for the grant scheme. However, feedback from judges has still been useful in developing the scheme and this evaluation.
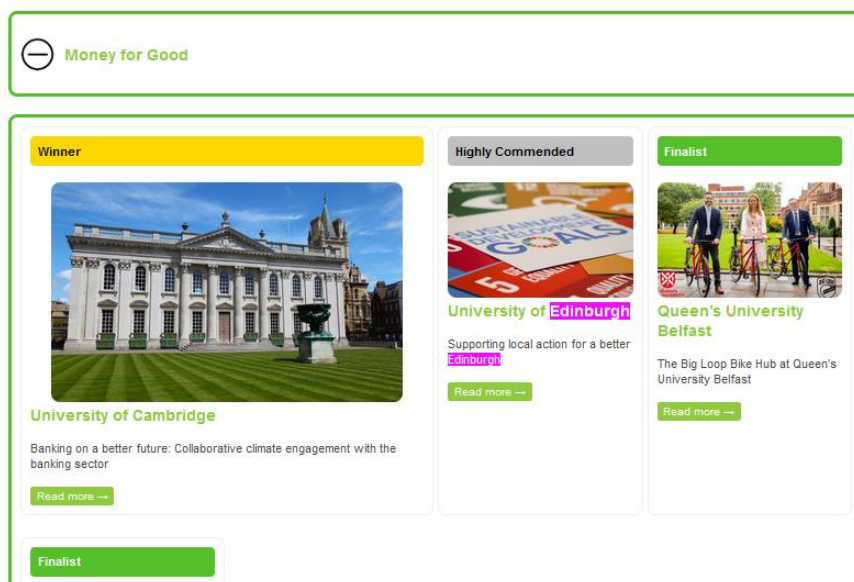
University of Edinburgh community grant scheme highly commended in Money for Good category of 2022 EAUC Green Gown Awards

More informal recognition of the scheme has been the **creation of similar schemes by other Scottish universities**, drawing directly from the University's experience. This knowledge sharing with fellow high education professionals has been undertaken by Stuart Tooley, the University's member of the Scottish Universities' Community Network ('SUCN').

Other places it's recommended the University looks for opportunities to share and obtain recognition for the scheme in future are:

- **The National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement ('NCCPE'):** Particularly in light of its more recent involvement with the Civic University Network, the NCCPE is taking some interest in engaging with communities beyond the boundaries of public engagement with research. The NCCPE runs an annual conference and the Civic University Network may offer its own fora.
- **The SCVO (Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations) Gathering:** Having benefitted from the various sessions on grant making in recent years, it would only be fair to try and share what we've learned with other Gathering attendees.

Characteristics of project applicant organisations and beneficiaries

Equalities Impact Assessment of the scheme – audience representation

In spite of the areas of improvement identified as needed for people of BAME origin by the Equalities Impact Assessment, the application and success rates for **BAME-led organisations** were **in line with what would be expected** given local population statistics for BAME people. We chose to focus on BAME-**led** as these organisations have been highlighted by the Runnymede Trust as potential victims of **institutional racism** (Runnymede Trust, consulted 22 February 2023).

In contrast, while **we could identify no areas where our scheme did not meet the needs of LGBTQI+ groups**, projects benefitting these groups appeared to be **under-represented** among successful applications. It is possible that the needs of this diverse group are, in some cases, met elsewhere. In the case of people undergoing gender reassignment, recent conversation with a grantee who has been working on a project to benefitting the transgender community (Groundswell Scotland, speaking in February 2023) suggested that maybe individual members of this community are currently still dealing with their own personal situations to an extent that user-led community organisations are not yet feasible. A member of the Scotland committee for the **National Lottery Community Fund** also reports they receive fewer applications than one would expect for projects benefitting LGBTQI+ groups (speaking in February 2023).

In response to the Equalities Impact Assessment, a number of changes to scheme are in progress or planned. Many of these are changes are independently indicated by general funding best practice. Other specifically relate to protected characteristics and are:

1. Undertaking targeted promotion to LGBTQI+ groups
2. Embed improved equalities monitoring in the grant application and/or reporting processes
3. Signal the support that is available to applicants, including BSL interpreting and in-person options for pre-application advice meetings
4. Consider how to diversify the group of people involved with making decisions about grant funding

The University's Community team has already taken or is exploring action against all four points.

What we know about project beneficiaries

As acknowledged and justified in our Equalities Impact Assessment, it will never be practical or permissible to have **exhaustive equalities monitoring data** for all project beneficiaries. However, we have been able to discern the following about the beneficiaries of the 157 projects funded to date which have included final reports:

Beneficiary group (protected characteristics)	Number of final reports where group mentioned among beneficiaries
Children and young people (age)	66 projects
Older people (age)	27 projects
Of BAME origin or non-English speaking country of origin	47 projects
LGBTQI+ and/or undergoing or undergone gender reassignment	20 reports
Disability	45 reports
Pregnancy/maternity	10 reports

Table 4: Representation of specific protected characteristic groups in final reports

The categories used here are <u>not</u> standard protected characteristics groupings but are workable given the **non-standard monitoring** we have encouraged to date (this is being addressed, as already noted). It should be noted that, for many projects, it is **not an 'either/or'** situation. For example, a number of projects benefitted both children and older people, and at least one benefitted both people of BAME origin and those undergoing gender reassignment. It's important to note that this analysis only counts whether a group is mentioned, not **what proportion** of project beneficiaries they made up; our data doesn't allow for this rigour.

Based on these it does appear that a **disproportionate** number of projects benefit **children and young people** when you consider that, according to the 2011 Scottish census, the number of people aged 65+ in Scotland now outnumbers those aged under 15 (consulted 22nd February 2023). Depending on the purpose of the community grant scheme, this could be an asset rather than a negative: **there are long-recognised social returns of investing in children** (see e.g. 2009 report *Backing the future: why investing in children is good for us all,* consulted January 2023). However, this does require further exploration.

The Very Inclusive Play Club and The Natural Sensory Garden, a project to benefit young children with additional support needs

Based on the analysis of grantee beneficiary protected characteristics, we make an additional recommendation:

- The University's Community Team (in the first instance) discuss whether the apparent disproportionate representation of children and young people among project beneficiaries should be recognised as a specific objective of the scheme. Other possible action could be:
    - Continue to monitor age-related characteristics to see findings with more systematic data
    - Consider ring-fencing funding for projects which benefit older people
    - Encourage grantees to use engagement methods which are more likely to reach older people

Geographic spread of funded projects

When the scheme was launched in October 2017, the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal had just launched. The University is a partner in the Deal and so the geographic scope of the scheme was decided to be that covered by the Deal: **City of Edinburgh; Midlothian; West Lothian; East Lothian; Fife; Scottish Borders**. In the early stages of the scheme, there was some discussion about whether communities living closer to the University estate should benefit more from the scheme given that they may be more likely to be affected by any negative impacts of the University's operations (and simple existence). It was decided not to include this as part of the scheme's criteria.
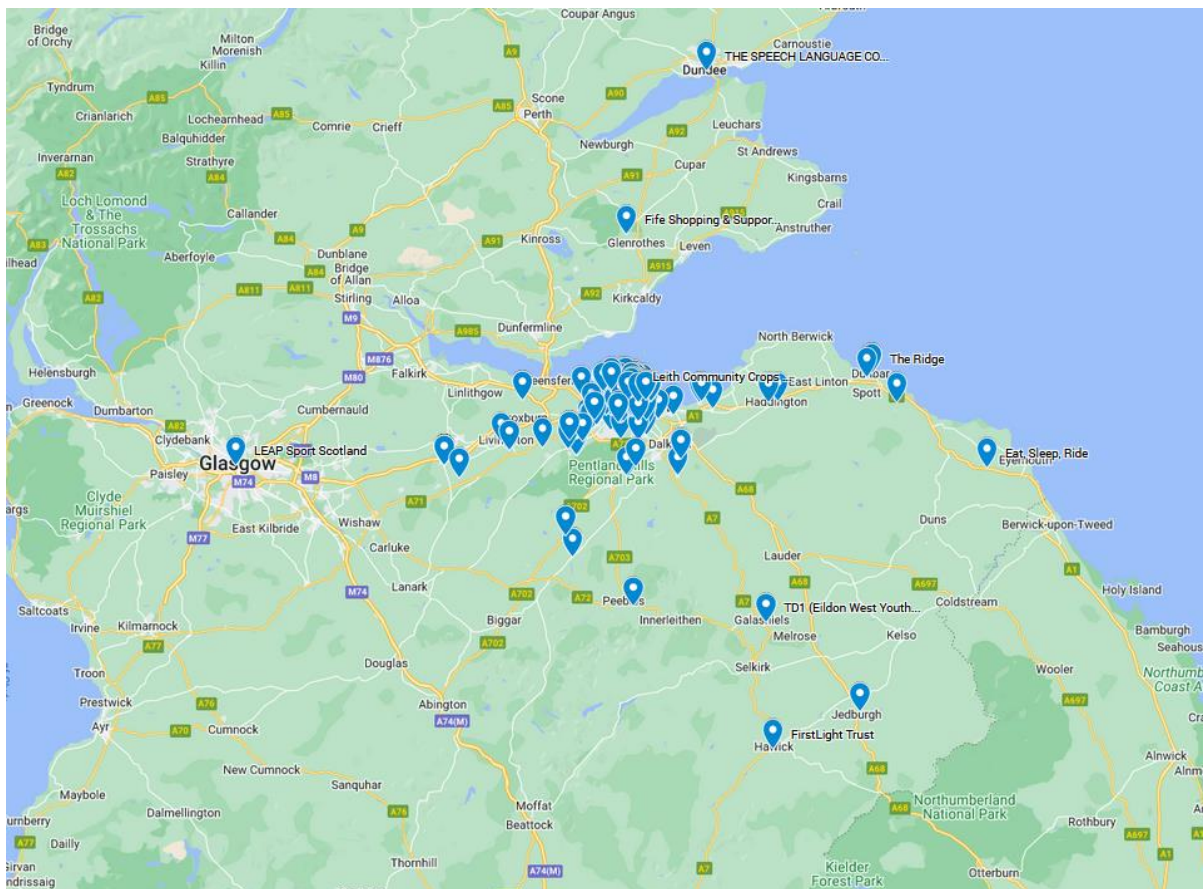
[Geographic spread of Community Grant funded organisations across the City Region Deal area (Oct 2017-February 2023)](#)

The distribution of projects across local authorities (based on funded organisation's address) has been as follows:

Local authority	Number of organisations funded
City of Edinburgh	183
Midlothian	6
West Lothian	6
East Lothian	8
Fife	2
Scottish Borders	7
Other*	1

Organisation with HQ based in Glasgow

Table 5: Spread of organisations funded across Edinburgh and South-East Scotland City Region

The great majority of organisations funded have been within the City of Edinburgh. It's important to note that some organisations have been funded more than once, so the actual concentration of funding may be slightly different. As of February 2023, organisations funded more than once by the University were:

No.	Organisation	Number of times funded
1	West Lothian Financial Inclusion Network	5
2	All4Paws	3
3	Bridgend Farmhouse	4
4	People Know How	3
5	Pilmeny Youth Centre	3
6	Art in Healthcare	2
7	Canongate Youth	2
8	Children Holiday Venture	2
9	Craigmillar Now	2
10	Cruse Bereavement Care Scotland	2
11	Dr Bell's Family Centre	2
12	Edinburgh Old Town Development Trust	2
13	Edinburgh Young Carers	2

14	Evolution Swim School	2
15	Goodtrees Neighbourhood Centre	2
16	Jock Tamson's Gairden	2
17	Leith Community Archers	2
18	Lyra	2
19	North Edinburgh Arts	2
20	North Edinburgh Dementia Care	2
21	Pilton Community Health Project	2
22	Pregnancy and Parents Centre	2
23	Preston St Primary School Parent Council	2
24	SCORE Scotland	2
25	Scran Academy	2
26	The Lighthouze	2
27	The Ridge	2
28	Tinderbox Collective	2
29	Winchburgh Community Growing Group	2
30	Youth Vision	2

Table 6: Organisations funded more than once by the University

This is 30 organisations out of a total of 176 organisations funded by the scheme – **17% of all organisations funded**.

It's still the case, however, that the **great majority of funding** has gone to organisations with an address in the **City of Edinburgh**. The University's Community Team has, at times, made efforts to increase numbers of applications from other local authorities by using **targeted communications**; this saw some **improvement**, especially for **West Lothian** and the **Scottish Borders**.

The organisation address is not necessarily where **project activity takes place**. Applicants sometimes mention **specific geographic areas for activities**. Those mentioned include:

- Balerno
- Broomhouse
- Broughton
- Craigentinny
- Craigmillar

- Currie
- Dalkeith
- Drylaw
- Dunbar
- Fountainbridge

- Gorebridge
- Gracemount
- Granton
- Hawick
- Jedburgh

- Juniper Green
- Kirknewton
- Leith
- Livingston
- Lochend
- Lochrin Basin
- Mayfield
- Muirhouse

- Newhaven
- Niddrie
- Old Town
- Pencaitland
- Penicuik
- Pennywell
- Pilton
- Roslin

- Queensferry
- Sighthill
- Southside
- Tollcross
- Viewforth
- Wester Hailes
- Woodburn (Midlothian)

Biodiversity Green Cruise on the Lochrin Belle, running along Edinburgh's Union Canal, as part of Fountainbridge Canalside Initiative's project
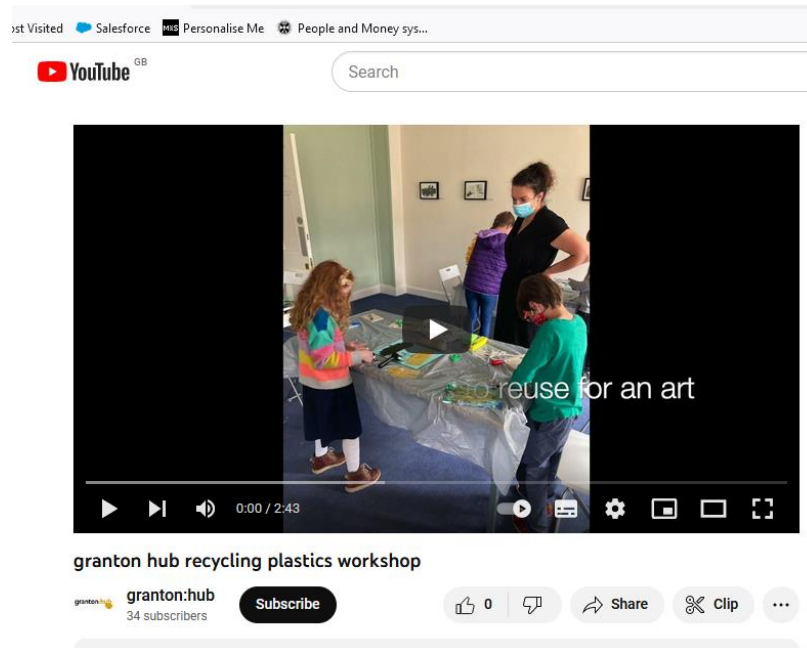
[Recycling plastic in Granton](#), **Edinburgh, as part of Granton:Hub's**

**Creating Coastal memories project**

Demographic insights

Over time, the community grant scheme has come to state **'positive social impact'** as one of two scheme objectives. This term is not defined further by the scheme, but one common understanding is **addressing social injustice**.

Using [Digimap (edina.ac.uk)](https://edina.ac.uk), the locations of community grantee organisations have been cross-referenced with geographic mappings of various factors which *can* contribute to societal inequalities: no formal qualifications; severe health conditions; unemployment; being a lone parent; being born outside Europe; living in social housing; being a child; being aged sixty-five or over. In general, **more organisations have been funded in areas with higher concentrations of households experiencing one or more societal inequalities**.

There are some small gaps:

1. In certain parts of **East** and **Midlothian**, close to the boundary with Edinburgh, there are high concentrations of people with **no formal qualifications** (darker purple), but not many grantees:
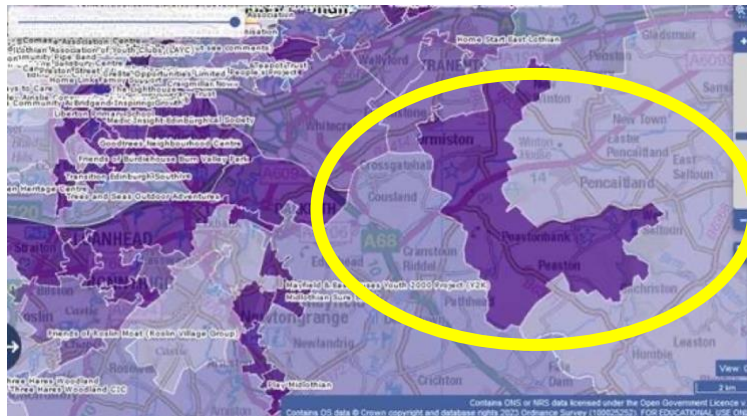

Mapping of organisation addresses against concentrations of people with no formal qualifications (East Lothian and Midlothian snapshot)

Similar is seen in parts of the Scottish Borders closer to the boundary with England (**Selkirk, Hawick, Coldstream**) and in Fife, just over the water from the City of Edinburgh:

No grants awarded to organisations in a part of Fife with high levels of no formal qualifications

Unsurprisingly, given what is known about the comorbidity of factors which contribute to social inequalities, the same areas show higher numbers of people with **severe health problems** (darker) orange, as shown here for **Kirkcaldy**:
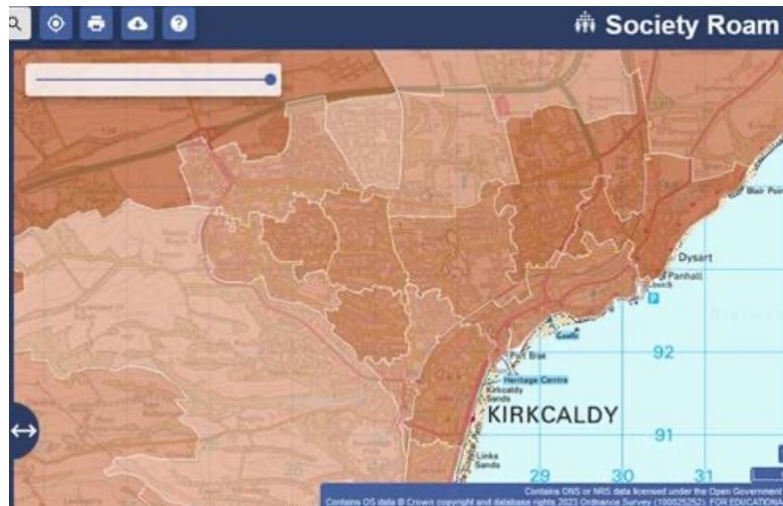

No grants awarded to organisations in a part of Fife with high levels of severe health problems

And **lone parents** are in a relatively high concentration on the **Edinburgh-East Lothian cusp** where there are no funded organisations:

No grants awarded to organisations in a part Midlothian with high concentrations of lone parents

West Lothian also stands out in a number of respects. Some parts of Livingston have high levels of unemployment and people born outside the UK; few community grantee organisations are based there. Within the City of Edinburgh, the **Clermiston estate** area stands out as having residents experiencing multiple inequalities; few community grantee organisations are very nearby.
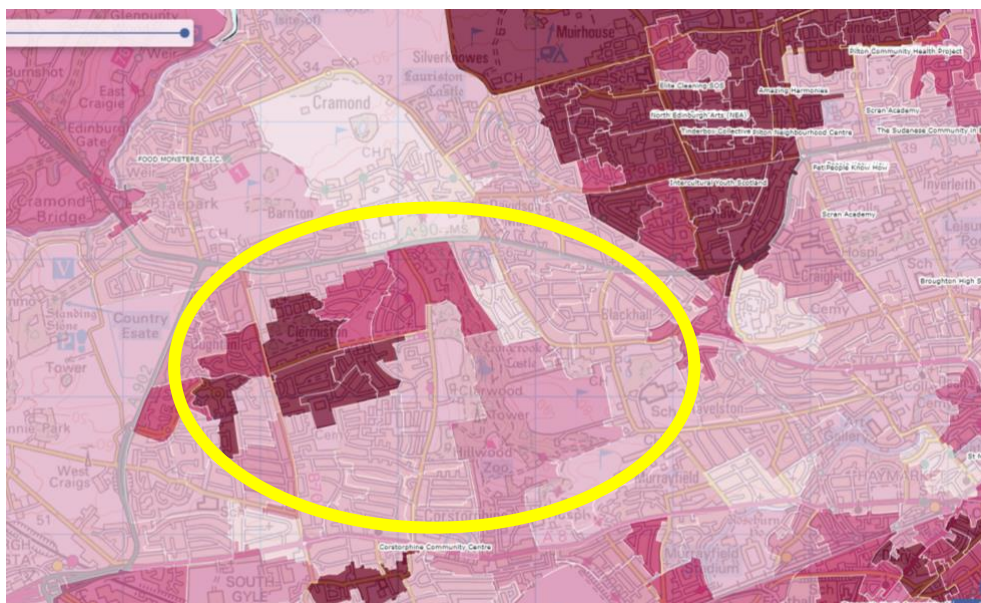
No community grantee organisations in immediate vicinity of Clermiston estate, Edinburgh

The following recommendations may help address apparent geographic gaps in the scheme's reach:

- Geographically targeted social media promotion (as far as is possible) to gap areas, especially Fife
- Making use of existing intermediary contacts, such as Balfour Beatty social impact team, to reach communities where the University does not have such strong links. Balfour Beatty will shortly be involved with construction of a college in Fife and has offered assistance in reaching communities there.

Grantee experience

Feedback and other evidence from grantees

Comments from past grantees' end-of-project reports indicate some of the things grantees value or would value:

*"As a local funder to a local project this is invaluable, the **turnaround application process is wonderful** and allows us to deliver immediately."*

*"Wish I'd made more of the Facebook Group and was sad to miss the grantees meet up – **felt like more of a community than other funds**."*

*"**Gaining access to contacts that the university has** with other children's charities in the local area would also be hugely beneficial to us."*

*"As an organisation managed by volunteers, we would find it useful if **the University could connect more organisations together** whose services overlap"*

*"'I am part of the Facebook Page and mailing list for the Edinburgh Local Community Grant Scheme. I value the information shared via these routes and **would like to remain part of these groups** if possible."*

*"Appreciated the **flexibility** shown around completing the project & submitting reports. The pandemic disrupted our plans."*

*"The **report length is quite considerable** given the size of the grant funds." (This sentiment expressed by at least one other grantee in their report.)*

*"We did **benefit tremendously from the dialogue and support that we received from the Edinburgh Local team** who worked positively alongside us to help us adjust our programme around obstacles and barriers for participants and also showed much appreciated empathy that enabled us to adapt our project deliver."*

Former grantees also report **positive relationships built with the University's Community Team**, at least one specifically naming Anne Douglas.

One final report was hand written, indicating possible **digital exclusion** of the writer.

Best practice in grant-making in the sector

Over the past few years, members of the University's Community Team have attended sessions at the SCVO Gathering on **fair funding**, the **role of funders** in a wellbeing economy, the **power dynamics** between funders and grantees and more, involving organisations including **Corra**, **Foundation Scotland**, **COSLA** and **TSI Scotland Network**. The sessions have been an excellent opportunity to hear from other funders of Scotland's third-sector but, most importantly, from **third sector organisations themselves**. At these sessions, the power dynamic between the funders and third-sector organisations in the room has been equal, meaning we could hear grantees speak more openly about what they need. A summary of one of the more recent discussions is here.

We have also had **individual conversations** about how to improve the grantee experience with third-sector representatives and grant-makers to find out their latest practice and wishes. These conversations have included those with:

- Dilraj Sokhi-Watson, formerly of Amina Muslim Women's Resource Centre
- Paul Wilson, Volunteer Edinburgh

- Jane Griffin, SCVO
- Naila Wood, National Lottery Community Fund

And, in April 2021, Sarah Anderson from the Community Team attended **Runnymede's** **Shared Futures conference** which looked at funders, funding and the BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) third sector.

The initial **Equalities Impact Assessment** of the community grant scheme was carried out in winter 2022 and drew on insights from this conference. This indicated that aspects of the scheme may not yet fully meet the needs of some protected groups, including older people, people not literate in English (for any reason), people with certain disabilities, people of BAME origin, and women working in the local third sector.

Based on the above best practice sources, as well as feedback from our past grantees, we have considered/are considering/are making/have made the **following improvements**:

Recommendation	Status & findings
Add value as a funder that goes beyond cash	**University already acted on this recommendation from an earlier SCVO Gathering.** • Community grantees connected by opt-in email list and Facebook group. Used to provide information about other funding and opportunities Community Team believes could be of genuine interest. • Online and physical get-togethers run for grantees since June 2019. Grantees connect with one another as well as the University. • Format being refreshed (again) to ensure value for grantees. • Aiming to try out refreshed format for get-togethers and Facebook group in 2023.
Use online application and reporting system used by other funders	**Web-based application and reporting forms being implemented.** • No online system appears to be prevalent among Scottish grant-makers except the multiple funds administered by Foundation Scotland. • New University form will run off Salesforce, already owned by the University. SCVO also uses Salesforce-based system. • Upshot explored but did not seem to add value for applicant or University.
Only ask for what is truly needed	**A number of changes will be made for the spring 2023 substantive grant round.** • Reverting to not requiring proof of expenditure. • Reverting to not requiring submission of constitution (except for companies). • Reducing complexity of end-of-grant reporting questions. • Signalling when project starts what equalities monitoring data will be required in final report. Requiring less detailed data to be

	collected in order to respond to final report equalities monitoring question.
Make objectives of funding clear	**A number of changes will be made for the spring 2023 substantive grant round.** • Introducing selection of Sustainable Development Goals to bring precision to definition of 'social impact' • Making sure key criteria are displayed to applicants in several places • Taking practical steps to make final reporting requirements unmissable for applicants at application stage
Make funding more accessible	**A number of changes will be made for the spring 2023 substantive grant round. Others are being retained as ideas.** • Simplifying language in forms and guidance. • Making form questions more direct and clear. • Avoiding questions which require long text responses. • Ensuring Community Team directly contactable by email and, post-pandemic, also phone • Undertaking print advertising of the scheme and offering a non-digital application method. • *Keeping 'recommend a friend for funding' as an idea to trial in future.* • *Keeping interview/spoken application process, as opposed to paper/computer, as an idea to trial in future.*
Make funding more flexible	**The University has already taken most possible action here.** • Small micro-grants (up to £500) can already be applied for at any time (introduced 2019), with decision and payment within a few weeks. • Community Team can discuss and sign off changes to projects once underway • Funding can already be used towards the salaries of existing staff as long as traceable to delivery of defined project. • Given scale of scheme – no more than £100,000 total/annum – making funds usable for core running costs likely not practical, *but to explore more*.

Offer long-term funding	**The University is already undertaking most relevant action here that's appropriate for the scale of the scheme. Other ideas are being explored.**
	• No limit on how many times organisations can apply BUT does need to be for new project each time.
	• Given the total budget pot of the scheme, offering multi-year funding (3-5 years) would mean very few organisations could be funded. Unlikely to pursue at this time.
	• *Funding for longer than 6 months is still to be explored. For organisations working on priority themes, to make it easier to grow relationships with the University. Would retain current approach alongside.*
	• Applicants can already discuss what counts as a 'new' project with the Community Team. This can be clarified and reminded to panel members in future.

Table 7: Best practice recommendations for the community grant scheme

Legal and financial duties and considerations

It's essential to the continued running of the scheme that it complies with local laws and regulations.

Charity law is an area for scrutiny given that the University is a registered charity in Scotland (SC005336) and the novelty of a university awarding charitable funds directly to communities. Whether

Object:

The advancement of education. Any other purpose that may reasonably be regarded as analogous to any of the other preceding purposes.

Details of the charity's operations

Charity Status:	Active
Last Updated:	02 Feb 2023
Constitutional Form:	Statutory corporation (Royal Charter etc)
Constitutional Form Date:	01 Jan 1992
Geographical Spread:	UK and overseas
Main Operating Location:	City of Edinburgh
Purposes:	"the advancement of education","any other purpose that may reasonably be regarded as analogous to any of the preceding purposes"
Beneficiaries:	"Children or young people","Older People","Other defined groups","No specific group, or for the benefit of the community","Other charities or voluntary bodies"
Types of activty undertaken:	"It makes grants, donations, loans, gifts or pensions to individuals","It makes grants, donations or gifts to organisations","It carries out activities or services itself"

it is 'the business' of the University to run a community grant scheme can be answered legally by referring to the **University's registered charitable objectives**:

University of Edinburgh charitable objectives (SC005336, consulted 17 Feb 2023)

During the earlier years of the scheme, one of its three stated aims was to "Create learning opportunities (including legal and non-traditional forms of learning)", in recognition of the University's purpose being "the advancement of education". This educational criterion was dropped during the first Covid-19 lockdown to enable the University to help local communities with urgent basic needs (food, primarily) using micro-grants of up to £500. This use of University funds still clearly falls within the Social and Civic Responsibility focus of the University's Strategy 2030. The learning opportunity criterion has not been re-introduced since Covid-19 given both Strategy 2030 and the observation that markers rarely found the criterion **meaningful in decision-making**. It may still be argued that the scheme meets the University's charitable objectives via "any other purpose […] for the preceding purposes" and, either way, University-internal legal advice obtained on more than one occasion by the Community Team and Board indicates that the grant scheme is low-risk activity. This situation does suggest, however, that 21st-century universities may need to consider whether their registered charitable objectives fully capture their purpose in today's world.

A second legal consideration has been any responsibility the University bears if it **funds activities which are not legal** in any way. To absolutely guarantee 100% compliance here would require monitoring disproportionate to the scale and purpose of the scheme. Realistic safeguards are in place through the application process. Applicants have been routinely asked about **third party consents/permission**s as part of their application since the scheme started. More recently, applicants have also been asked to confirm possession of staff/volunteer **PVG scheme membership** and "policies on working with vulnerable individuals".

The scheme's PVG requirement is likely **overly stringent** as stands: it extends beyond Disclosure Scotland's description of 'regulated work' to "anyone working along with vulnerable individuals". The latter is a position commonly adopted by many organisations, including some parts of the University (e.g. those involved in science outreach to schools), but it does potentially **overburden** Disclosure Scotland with applications for individuals who may only have incidental or infrequent contact with vulnerable groups; Disclosure Scotland can and has challenged borderline applications. Possession of a PVG alone also does not ensure **good safeguarding practice** is followed. It's recommended that a more pragmatic approach to PVG and safeguarding requirements is taken for future funding rounds that is in line with Disclosure Scotland's own definitions, rather than personal preferred practice of individuals involved with running the scheme.

Additionally, the description of someone as 'vulnerable', while correct in legal contexts, is these days colloquially often viewed as disempowering or condescending and many people involved in community work come to it initially as a service user/beneficiary (i.e. maybe someone 'vulnerable' at that time). It's recommended that alternative wording, such as 'safeguarding', be used when asking for relevant policies and practices concerning legally vulnerable groups.

The **scheme's terms and conditions** have been reviewed by the University's legal team at least twice since the scheme was founded. These directly and indirectly address relevant laws, including GDPR (data protection), safeguarding and protection of the natural and built environment. They also currently ask for proof of expenditure. The terms and conditions seem to cover all expected areas but, as University legal advice has confirmed, the University has very limited means of enforcing them beyond refusing funding if an organisation applied again. This is not a concern given the **risk profile and scale of the scheme**. When the scheme began, **proof of expenditure** was not required; recently received best practice advice suggests this was the correct approach all along. Requiring exhaustive proof of expenditure for £500-£5,000 (max.) is disproportionately rigorous and places unreasonable burden on grantees. I<u>t's recommended that the requirement for proof of expenditure is removed from the terms and conditions</u>.

The main issue with the terms and conditions is that concession to legal precision means they are not very readable. This causes **practical problems for University colleagues** who manage or communicate about the scheme. **'Legalese' can also be daunting** for people not accustomed to dealing with big institutions and/or who are neurodiverse and/or who have relatively low levels of **literacy in English** (as flagged in the scheme's Equalities Impact Assessment). <u>It's recommended that a plain English, friendly summary of key expectations of applicants is included more visibly in the application process</u>.

Segregation of financial duties has been embedded in the scheme from the beginning through the interaction between the grant review panel, the budget holder and the people making and authorising payments. The budget holder is chair of the grant panel but decisions are made by committee adopting a consensus approach. The staff member who sets up payments is not involved in decision making and is not the budget holder. The University's new People & Money finance system prevents any staff member from authorising payments that they themselves have set up. Prior to this, the administrator for the grant scheme would still select another staff member (usually one with no other involvement with the grant scheme) to approve payments. The University's Finance team had significant input into processes adopted when the scheme was created.

Community grant scheme changes (autumn 2017 – spring 2023)

Autumn 2017: Scheme launched with single objective to "involve and benefit people living and/or working in the Edinburgh City Region. (The Region includes the City of Edinburgh, Fife, West Lothian, Midlothian, East Lothian and the Scottish Borders)".

Spring 2018: Collection of financial information (bank account details, signature) separated out from main application form and only used for successful applicants. Three funding criteria introduced:

- "Increase engagement between the University and local communities". Made explicit a criterion implicitly assumed by some markers in first round.
- "Have a positive social impact." Made explicit a criterion implicitly assumed by some markers in first round.
- "Create learning opportunities (including informal and nontraditional forms of learning)." In recognition of University's registered charitable purposes.

Spring 2019:

- Introduction of a micro-grants scheme to help funnel ad hoc community requests for support. Open all year for applications of up to £500.
- Wording of engagement criterion updated to recognise partnership in a way which did not disadvantage organisations with no pre-existing links to the University: "Add value to new or existing partnerships between the University and local communities".

June 2019: Informal community-building get-togethers for grantees began, later to be accompanied by email list and Facebook group.

2020: Routine analysis of end-of-grant reports begun.

Summer 2020:

- One-off themed call for Covid-related micro-grants.
- 'Learning opportunities' criterion dropped from scheme in connection; never returned and extended to larger grants also in time.
- Partnership criterion dropped from micro-grants on basis of proportionality of effort for applicants.

2021: Weighting of social impact and partnership criteria altered. Instead of having equal weight, former now has twice weight of latter.

Summer 2021:

- One-off themed call for 'green' micro-grants in recognition of COP26 Summit being held in Glasgow.
- First Data Protection Impact Assessment of scheme. Recommendations included:
  - Replace requirements for drawn signature to acknowledge terms & conditions in initial form with a check box (signature already originally removed from original form in 2019 for data protection reasons)
  - Share applications with panel via SharePoint/OneDrive instead of Dropbox.
  - Improve Community Team internal communication around consents applicable to media provided in end-of-grant reports.
  - Agree and implement a personal data retention and deletion schedule and communicate this to grantees (5 years subsequently agreed).
  - Check sharing of end-of-grant report analysis document (some sensitive personal data occasionally present).

Autumn 2022: First Equalities Impact Assessment of scheme carried out.