

Mayor of West Yorkshire Cost of Living Emergency Fund Interim Evaluation Report



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The £3m Mayor of West Yorkshire's Cost of Living Emergency Fund was announced on 21st October 2022 to respond to the cost-of-living crisis, with objectives aligning with West Yorkshire Combined Authority's (WYCA) Inclusive Growth Framework, including:
 - To provide economically vulnerable communities with support for foundational things such as food, heating, financial wellbeing, and mental health.
 - To support the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector at a time where its services are in increasing demand and donations are also falling.
2. £949,500 of funds were to be distributed in the first phase via the West Yorkshire Local Authorities and then to their local VCSE sector partners, to directly support those that were most adversely affected.
3. Target beneficiaries of support were those identified as being in in-work poverty and workless households facing financial hardship due to the cost-of-living crisis, with attendant risks on their physical and mental wellbeing and economic exclusion.
4. WYCA Funding Agreements were put in place with the five LAs by 7th December, with distribution of funding and delivery of activities starting by Christmas 2022, and activities expected to have been largely completed by April 2023.
5. This interim evaluation was commissioned to identify: the impact, value for money, what types of activity worked well, and lessons and recommendations for the next phases of the Fund. 18 consultations with the LAs and VCSE organisations and associated management information and reports contributed to the findings set out in this report.
6. The delivery arrangements differ across West Yorkshire to reflect local needs, but have common elements including:
 - Building on existing arrangements and those developed as a response to Covid 19.
 - Integrating with other funding and support availability, e.g., Household Support Fund.
 - Largely embedding Asset-Based Community Development¹ in their approach to supporting the most vulnerable and in-need groups; and helping them to move forward from crisis situations.
 - Mainly face-to-face / in-person support.
 - Strength of integration of services into local community networks and provision, those in need have been able to access wrap-around /holistic support to address their needs.

¹ See the following for local examples of Asset Based Community Development: [Home | ABCD In Leeds](#)

- The Mayor's Funding has enabled direct support to beneficiaries and contributed to running costs of community / delivery organisations, volunteer costs, and in some cases enabled them to try innovative approaches.
7. Service delivery across each of the districts included combinations of the following, filling local gaps and providing additionality in terms of resource/capacity:
- Welfare and debt advice and support.
 - Food bank /community pantry/ emergency food parcels.
 - Warm spaces – where they have not already been supported by the LAs.
 - Cost of living /food/ energy vouchers – or practical support to access these (where these were funded via LAs).
 - Referrals /direct access to wide range of other support and services including employment support, health support, housing, and food bank.
 - Digital /Wi-Fi access.
8. Findings on inclusiveness and demand for the support include:
- Demand for the services across all districts is rising – and most of it needs to be delivered in person, if it is to reach the people that most need it.
 - Most targets set have been achieved /exceeded e.g., 2,009 beneficiaries were supported in Kirklees by the first monitoring return (compared with an overall target of 600), and in Calderdale 1098 beneficiaries were supported December and January, compared with an overall target of 285.
 - There are significant numbers of those with disabilities/health conditions accessing the support.
 - For some providers, the resources available limit service availability in terms of both staffing and opening hours. With more money they could deliver more.
9. Key findings in terms of impact and Value for Money (VFM) include:
- 6,481 individuals/households had been supported against a target of 3,172 - with more likely to be confirmed by end of project monitoring.
 - Significant VFM with reduced unit costs of £146.50 against a planned unit cost of £299.34.
 - Impacts of the support on individuals and households including:
 - Increase in income and financial security.
 - Social connections and capital.
 - Improved health, well-being and confidence.
10. Key lessons learned include:
- The delivery models work effectively, providing excellent VFM, enabling diverse groups to access the support they need.
 - Not to prescribe and make assumptions about what you think people need – consultation is essential to fully respond to the needs.
 - One size does not fit all – provision needs to reflect the local needs and gaps. Different demographics impact on service demand and take-up and each area

/ delivery organisation has different existing provision, which should not be duplicated through this fund.

- Longer-term planning and funding agreements are needed to better enable VCSE organisations to plan their staffing (including training volunteers). These organisations cannot easily recruit to short-term contracts (and there is a skills shortage/ gap in specialist areas e.g., debt advice).

11. Recommendations going forward into the next phase of the fund include:

- Encourage an increase in provision to address mental health support gaps, across each of the LA areas.
- Support, sustain and further develop VCSE sector infrastructures already in place – retaining knowledge, experience and relationships, to enable beneficiaries to gain resilience through trusted local provision, with local planning and coordination, minimising duplication of support.
- Share experience and approaches across groups within a LA area, and amongst delivery leads/LAs at the WY level.
- Ensure that there is sufficient forward planning for activities that involve the VCSE sector. They need time to position themselves/plan, tender and put in place resources to support capacity.
- Develop a monitoring and evaluation framework to fully assess the impact of the Fund and identify good practice for sharing and future delivery.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Mayor's Cost of Living Emergency Fund aims to respond to the cost-of-living crisis by providing funds to directly help some of those most adversely affected by rapid inflationary pressures and at risk of economic exclusion, namely those in workless households and those in in-work poverty.
- 1.2 Strategically, the fund fits within the Combined Authority's Inclusive Framework, and aligns to the Mayor's manifesto pledge to Support local businesses and be a champion for our local economy, including recognising the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector as an economic sector in its own right.
- 1.3 Thus, in addition to responding to individual, household and community needs, the Fund is also intended to address issues facing the voluntary and community sector organisations delivering the front-line services and practical support to these residents, recognising that they are experiencing falling donations at the same time as increasing demand for its support and services.
- 1.4 The overall delivery model enables the WY LAs to work with their established VCSE sector partners to provide the additional emergency support needed for those that are most economically disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.
- 1.5 A total of £3 million gainshare funding has been allocated to the Fund delivery from Nov 2022 to May 2024: £1 million in phase 1 for November 2022 to April 2023 and £2 million in phase 2 expenditure for May 2023 to May 2024.
- 1.6 This interim evaluation, is a key element of the overall project and is required to:
 - To understand the scale and types of impacts being delivered by the fund, including value for money.
 - To identify learning and an understanding of what works well and why, to support the development of activities in the next phase of the fund.
- 1.7 Tokos Solutions was commissioned to undertake this evaluation within a short timescale to inform the next phase of the fund, with evaluation activities taking place from the end of February to the end of March 2023.

2. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

2.1 Our evaluation approach included data collection and consultation concentrating on:

- Desk research to analyse all delivery, monitoring and management information.
- One to one/group teams or zoom/telephone consultation interviews to collect quantitative and qualitative data with the key stakeholders.

2.2 Desk Research

2.2.1 Desk research incorporated reviewing all the available project data and documentation, provided by the contract manager and delivery partners at all levels (where data is available), including:

- Project monitoring and performance data (beneficiary numbers, interventions/support provided by customer type, outcomes from support).
- Delivery progress reports at LA/service provider level.
- Documentation produced to promote the support.
- Documentation and details of processes used to engage residents and deliver activity/support.
- Monitoring and data collection processes.
- Beneficiary feedback and case studies.

2.2.2 The focus of this research was to provide:

- A delivery context and an understanding of the objectives and delivery model in each LA area.
- Information and details of activities undertaken/support provided, by target group, LA area and intervention type.
- Data to support an assessment of the appropriateness of delivery models and effectiveness of the interventions to address local resident needs.
- Data against which impact of support/ participant satisfaction can be measured.

2.3 Consultation Interviews

2.3.1 We undertook 18 (Annex A) structured video interviews with:

- Staff from each of the LAs involved in managing the fund in their areas.
- Each of the local VCS umbrella organisations overseeing delivery in their areas.
- At least two of community-based service providers in most of the LA area (as far as we were able within the timeframe).

2.3.2 The focus of the interviews were to build on the other data collected and to:

- Identify appropriateness of initial Fund design and delivery models.
- Obtain a picture of the overall project delivery and management processes and operations.

- Identify good practice and challenges/improvements required in process and delivery mechanisms.
- Obtain information on the outcome and impact of the project on residents, service providers and other stakeholders.
- Identify lessons learned, in particular what worked well, and where improvements are needed.
- Identify potential case studies.

2.4 It should be noted that a number of additional consultation opportunities were offered by the delivery partners, however, they could not be organised within the short timescales.

2.5 We presented draft key findings from the research and consultations at an online meeting convened by the WYCA Contract Manager on 30th March 2023.

2.6 This report expands upon and firms up those key findings.

3. PLANNED IMPLEMENTATION AND DELIVERY OF THE FUND

3.1 This section sets out details on the proposed implementation of the Fund.

3.2 Fund Purpose and Objectives

- 3.2.1 The core purpose of the fund is to provide economically vulnerable communities with support for foundational things such as food, heating, financial wellbeing, and mental health.
- 3.2.2 To make a meaningful and immediate regional contribution to ameliorating some of the most pressing socially and economically damaging aspects of the cost-of-living crisis.
- 3.2.3 Help VCSE organisations to offer wider support including providing valuable basic skills and training to the target groups, e.g. money and debt management skills.
- 3.2.4 Support the VCSE sector at a time where its services are in increasing demand and donations are also falling, in turn supporting people from the most disadvantaged communities in West Yorkshire; and contributing to increased resilience of the local economy.

3.3 Timescales

- 3.3.1 West Yorkshire Political Leaders (the Leaders of the region's 5 LAs and the WY Mayor) reached an agreement in principle, in August 2022 for the MCA to develop a fund to enable the VCSE sector to increase the help available the most financially vulnerable people through the cost-of-living crisis and help to prevent their economic exclusion.
- 3.3.2 Delivery arrangements were developed in consultation with senior officers in each West Yorkshire LA and a 6-month first phase from November 2022 to April 2023 was proposed.
- 3.3.3 The Mayor's Cost of Living Emergency Fund was formally announced by West Yorkshire Combined Authority on 21st October 2022.
- 3.3.4 Agreements setting out the terms of the funding were finalised in consultation with the LAs and sent out to each of the Local Authorities on 5th and 7th December 2022.
- 3.3.5 VCSEs started delivering the support, some at risk, before Christmas.
- 3.3.6 Activities funded by the allocation were to be completed by April 2023, unless otherwise agreed with the MCA.

3.4 Delivery arrangements

- 3.4.1 The project was to be delivered by the five West Yorkshire LAs in partnership with their established contracted networks of VCSE organisations.
- 3.4.2 This approach was intended to build on the LAs' longstanding commercial relationships with VCSE sector organisations in their districts, recognising:

- Existing arrangements could be scaled up to enable immediate delivery.
- The VCSE sector was ideally placed to access the hardest to reach communities in need of emergency aid and advice during the cost-of-living crisis.
- VCSE partners know their local residents well and so can quickly identify need, especially those in our most deprived communities that are also hard to reach and seldom heard.

3.4.3 Target beneficiaries of support were those identified as being in in-work poverty and workless households facing financial hardship due to the cost-of-living crisis, with attendant risks on their physical and mental wellbeing and economic exclusion.

3.4.4 Access routes to the proposed support packages included the following:

- Referrals from LA Welfare Advisory services (in some cases e.g. Bradford wholly delivered by the VCSE).
- Other Council run Customer Services direct access offices, Single Point of Contact centres (SPOCs), Community Hubs, Libraries, community anchors, Family Hubs etc.
- Providers of support offered and supplied by third parties such as food bags; bedding; clothing; fuel top ups etc.

3.4.5 To identify packages of support for those at greatest risk, VCSE partners would be required to ask potential beneficiaries key questions around worklessness as part of the basic (triaged) assessment process. This was intended to focus support on those at risk of falling into debt and reducing the subsequent impacts of this, including on mental and physical wellbeing and/or failure to maintain the conditions of welfare benefits and the sanctions which if applied can leave people destitute.

3.4.6 Each LA district confirmed its intention to allocate funding to established VCSE partners to provide beneficiaries identified as being in financial distress with some or all of the following packages of support:

- Wraparound Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG), such as debt advice, mental health support and employability assistance.
- Access to emergency aid, including food parcels/banks and fuel vouchers, and referrals.
- Provision of an accessible network of warm 'banks'/places to enable provision of free, warm and welcoming and safe spaces in communities across the district.

3.5 Funding Agreements

3.5.1 Funding agreements between the MCA and individual LAs were signed, and included confirmation of:

- Funding allocations.
- The packages of support to be provided to the target beneficiary groups in each LA area, and numbers of beneficiaries targeted.

- Monitoring arrangements to be put in place to enable evaluations.
- Breakdown of costs including delivery and management overheads.
- How Mayoral financial support will be publicly acknowledged, including in any marketing collateral, social media and press notices.

3.5.2 The breakdown of the funding allocated for the first phase was as follows:

BUDGET	£
Central Costs	
Project Management and evaluation	50,500
Local District allocations	
Calderdale	85,000
Bradford	219,450
Kirklees	178,600
Leeds	323,950
Wakefield	142,500
Total distributed by LAs via VCSEs	949,500
Grand Total	1,000,000

3.6 Fund Targets and Impact and Monitoring Arrangements

3.6.1 The following were set out as target beneficiaries in the grant funding agreements with each LA:

- Workless households (i.e. those households where at least one person is aged 16 to 64 and is either unemployed or economically inactive).
- Those experiencing in-work poverty.

3.6.2 Each LA was also set specific targets for numbers to be supported as follows:

District	Minimum unique target beneficiaries to be supported
Calderdale	285
Bradford	732
Kirklees	600
Leeds	1080
Wakefield	475
Total	3172

3.6.3 Each LA was required to use established monitoring mechanisms developed with local VCSE delivery partners. This was intended to ensure that data collection was not a barrier to take-up of support by those that need it.

3.6.4 The following details were required to be monitored:

- Unemployed beneficiaries (including long-term unemployed) supported.
- Inactive beneficiaries supported.
- Employed beneficiaries.
- Those gaining employment, engaging in positive activities that address barriers to work or widen participation in training.

3.6.5 Monitoring would enable the evaluation of impacts and help to inform the design and delivery of the subsequent Phase 2 of support. In the longer term, it would also help to identify economic impacts, including how the support may have contributed to:

- Increased income levels and poverty reduction.
- Increased employment in disadvantaged groups
- Reduced unemployment rate.
- % of people long term unemployed into work

3.7 Governance and Overall Project Management

3.7.1 The following arrangements were planned for the governance and overall project management, as set out in planning documentation:

- An Emergency Fund Project Board to provide project management, with senior officer representation appointed by each LA and the MCA.
- The Board to build on existing officer links between the CA and LAs, e.g. Directors of Development, Team West Yorkshire, and Heads of Economic Policy.
- The purpose of the Board would be to ensure oversight/monitoring of impact of the Fund, commission evaluation, and inform the design of future tranches of the Fund.
- Political accountability of the Fund to sit initially with the MCA, with scrutiny provided through established local and CA governance arrangements.

4. LOCAL DELIVERY MODELS AND ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 This section sets out the operating models and delivery arrangements which have been established for the deployment of the Mayor's Fund in each of the 5 LA areas (Calderdale, Bradford, Kirklees, Leeds, and Wakefield). Evidence of progress is summarised, and case studies are provided, and also in Section 5.

4.2 Calderdale

4.2.1 Governance and approach:

- The Anti-poverty partnership oversees the Fund, with support via Council.
- The Council were able to combine the Fund with Council and Community Foundation funds to provide a wider package of support and bring more value for money and impact.
- The Calderdale Cost of Living Fund was awarded to 34 charities and organisations to help them support more people affected by the cost-of-living crisis. Together, Calderdale Council, the Mayor of West Yorkshire's Cost of Living Emergency Fund and the Community Foundation for Calderdale came together to pledge £225,000.
- The Funds are distributed via Community Foundation for Calderdale grants programme and Mayor's resources are filling gaps in other support.

4.2.2 Providers:

- 12 voluntary and community organisations accessing Mayoral funding, including:
 - Disability Support Calderdale
 - The Space at Field Lane
 - Age UK Calderdale and Kirklees
 - Our Place Calderdale
 - St Augustine's centre
 - Noah's Ark Centre
 - Citizen's Advice Bureau Calderdale
 - The Basement Recovery project
 - Advancement of Community Empowerment.
 - Mixenden and Illingworth PCC
 - The Brunswick Centre (from February)
- Funds largely enabled the provision of warm spaces and an increase in staffing resources for voluntary and community organisations involved in delivering welfare advice.

4.2.3 Service delivery and funding allocations:

- The Fund primarily focuses on warm spaces, welfare advice, support and resilience, with some funds supporting emergency support.
- Coverage across all wards.
- The criteria for funds included:
 - Up to £3000 was available for organisations with a track record of providing emergency support.
 - Prevention, £500-£5000 was available for organisations to prevent people reaching crisis through communal warm spaces.

- Increasing resilience, providers of local advice and support services, including existing providers who are looking to boost capacity over the winter months due to increased need could apply for up to £15,000.

CASE STUDY – Noah’s Ark, Calderdale

Mary, a mum with three children suffering from domestic and financial abuse with poor mental health was referred to Noah’s Ark by Calderdale Council’s Vulnerable Customer Support team, after she had contacted them in a distressed state about her council tax arrears.

From initial chats with Mary and asking how she felt about the future it was apparent that her wellbeing was low, and the possible use of enforcement agents was taking its toll on her. Mary said “I feel a failure as a mum. I can’t provide the things my children need... some days I don’t want to get out of bed, other days I feel that suicide is the best option”.

As a result of pre advice checks it was evident that Mary was overspent by £200 per month therefore Noah’s Ark recommended Mary enter a Debt Relief Order to clear her debts and give her the fresh start financially that she needed. Mary was very emotional when she realised she could walk out of the door debt free. Some further advice for Mary included terminating her mobile contract and moving to a SIM only deal; returning her rented washing machine (she was provided with a new one via the Household Support Fund); signing up for programmes such as Budget Boss, to learn how to manage money better; and Halifax Opportunities Trust support to make the first steps into looking for work. She also had a visit from The Green Doctor Service to establish whether savings could be made through greater energy efficiency.

As a result of these changes, Mary went from a large budget deficit to a small surplus, with all her bills paid and some money being saved. Her emotional and financial wellbeing was greatly improved, and she thanked the staff at Noah’s Ark, saying “I left feeling so overwhelmed with how much I felt she (Mary’s advisor) cared. I left with bags of food and toiletries for me and my kids. I am so grateful for the help, I truly am. Noah’s Ark is an amazing place for anyone struggling”.

4.3 Bradford

4.3.1 Governance and approach:

- Planning group actively involved in agreeing the approach. This included: VCSE welfare advice Council funded lead organisations: Family Action, St Vincent De Paul/CHAS, Bradford and Airedale Citizens Advice Bureau and Law Centre (CAB), Equality Together, Credit Union and representatives from Public Health (Vulnerable People’s lead) and the Council’s Customer Services Manager.
- The Fund allocation was to support two programmes:
 - *Mental Health Advocacy*: The continuation of the mental health advocacy lead supporting the direct access customer services offices in Bradford city centre and Keighley Town centre.
 - *Welfare Advice*: The extension of welfare advice services across the district with an emphasis on joining up need across an existing ‘warm spaces’ programme where possible.

- The overall approach also included a much-needed capacity building element focusing on training for volunteers/apprentices to create a pool of advisers, addressing skills shortage/gaps issues facing the sector, given the increase in demand for such services.

4.3.2 Providers:

- Equality Together - delivering the mental health advocacy strand.
- Five funding agreements with VCSE providers delivering the welfare advice element:
 - Family Action (changed to Karmand Advice centre part-way through) – covering Bradford East.
 - St Vincent's De Paul – Bradford South.
 - Bradford & Airedale Citizen's Advice Bureau – covering two areas – Bradford West including city centre and Airedale, including Keighley, Shipley and Bingley.
 - Equality Together - covering the needs of those with long-term and complex health conditions across the District.

4.3.3 Service delivery and funding allocations:

- Mental Health Advocacy – allocated £19,450 to provide a specialist mental health support worker within the direct access Council Customer Services walk in services, based in the Bradford City centre and Keighley Town centre. Following an increase in take-up of digital service provision during the pandemic, customers who 'walk in' are more likely to have multiple complex disadvantages, including concurrent mental health issues.
- Welfare Advice - allocated £200,000 (£40,000 per organisation) to help existing providers extend their professional welfare advice services, including direct sessional and/or digital service delivery, into the district's 'Warm Spaces' locations as well as other areas identified as being in 'high need'.

4.4 Kirklees

4.4.1 Governance and approach:

- Cabinet decision to use the Kirklees Local Welfare Provision scheme as a vehicle to provide support through the VCSE Sector to provide targeted support, supplementing the support already provided by Kirklees directly and the measures announced by the Government. Thus, part of wider package of support including Household Support Fund and Council funds.
- These Funds are managed by One Community, with community organisations bidding in through their grant programme, and One Community providing support for to applicant organisations. Council delivery of Household support fund, with referrals between the service providers and the Council for additional resources.
- Contributing to the delivery of the Kirklees Cost of Living Emergency Action plan, with strands including Emergency response, Resilience and Prevention. Mayor's Fund enabling stronger focus on resilience.

4.4.2 Providers:

- The Mayor's funding was allocated to 34 diverse community groups, including:
 - Al Mubarak Foundation
 - Chickenley Community Centre
 - Cleckheaton Foodbank
 - Communities Together
 - Huddersfield Mission
 - Indian Muslim Welfare Society (IMWS)
 - Northorpe Hall Child & Family Trust
 - Pay & Employment Rights Services (Yorkshire) Ltd
 - Sensory World
 - Shaw Cross Club for young people
 - Thornton Lodge Action Group
- The first tranche of the Mayor's funding £178,600 was allocated to community groups in full by the end of Jan 2023.



Photo: The Mayor's visit to Holmfirth Food Bank

4.4.3 Service delivery and funding allocations:

- The main service areas and proportion of funding allocated were as follows:
 - Warm Spaces – 25%
 - Food provision - 34%
 - Advice provision – 22%
 - Volunteer costs, staffing, overheads – in the community groups – 9%
- In addition, One Community were allocated a 10% admin fee (the Council did not take any fee).

Evidence of Support in Kirklees

Warm Spaces

£20,559 has been spent on Warm Spaces.

1,195 hours of warm space was provided in the community.

718 Households accessed warm space provision.

Advice

£30,887 has been spent on advice services.

1,121 hours of advice services were offered.

530 households accessed advice.

Food provision

£109,294 has been spent on food provision.

2,132 food provisions have been issued. This is a mix of food packs, hot meals, grocery only vouchers.

761 Household have been supported.

4.5 Leeds

4.5.1 Governance and approach:

- The Mayor's Fund is primarily focused on enabling VCSE to provide warm spaces, building on the Council's existing Warm Spaces ([LCC Warm Spaces Map](#)).
- Some Mayoral funding has also been allocated for Leeds CAB and their partners to maintain their welfare advice services. Due to rising costs linked to inflation there would have been a reduction in service provision at a time of significant need.
- Voluntary Action Leeds (VAL) has managed the funding allocated to Warm Spaces, with a requirement for community organisations to bid into the available resource.

4.5.2 Providers:

- Community organisations were offered the opportunity to become part of the Warm Spaces network followed by co-approval between VAL and the Council. Organisations have to confirm that they have a:
 - Safeguarding Policy
 - Public Liability Insurance
 - A Health and Safety Risk Assessment
 - Appropriate signposting knowledge for staff and volunteers (for which VAL offer training)
 - That the provision is consistent with the principle of a Welcoming Space.

- Over 135 community organisations have taken up funding from VAL to offer Warm Spaces. These include:
 - Beeston Village Community Centre
 - Callister Hall
 - FoodCycle Seacroft
 - Gateway Church, St Mark's Road
 - Meanwood Community Centre
 - Moor Allerton Elderly Care
 - People Matters
 - Rainbow Junktion Community Café
 - Shine Workspace
 - Swarthmore Education Centre
 - The Welcome
- Warm spaces have also been provided by organisations working with sex workers and vulnerable women, and some are 'Enhanced' Warm Spaces for people with poor respiratory health/Covid nervousness.
- The organisations provide a coverage across the City, that ensures that 65% of the population are within 10 minutes of a Warm Space.

4.5.3 Service delivery and funding allocations:

- The provision of a Warm Space includes:
 - A **welcoming** space, with free basic refreshments e.g. tea and coffee, activities/reading materials, staff or volunteers available to greet and help ensure people feel at home.
 - A **safe** space, with H&S assessed and risks minimised, Public Liability insurance, can offer people some basic immediate support, people serving food have a Level 2 Food Hygiene certificate.
 - A **supportive** space, with staff ready to listen, or can signpost people to support if they need it, and link to other local organisations.

CASE STUDY – Warm Spaces, examples of feedback provided to VAL by VCSE sector organisations accessing the Mayor's Fund

Social Connections:

One lady, an Iranian refugee, first attended Warm Welcome having been referred through Food bank. She was keen to come to a space where she could sit and talk with others to practise her English. After the first week she invited along another Iranian family and her husband now also attends regularly.

Each week she enjoys coming along, talking with others, doing crafts that we have out each week and sharing a meal together. She will also often take additional portions of the meal home to have during the week.

We have also been able to support her in applying for a provisional driving licence and understand the letters she had received from the DVLA.

She has been keen to find other opportunities to help out and practise her English and so has been volunteering weekly at both a Baby Basics session and a Tots group. In addition to this she has come along with her husband to Sunday services and is getting to know many others within the community.

- Funding allocated to organisations to provide the warm spaces is as follows:
 - Small (Less than 3 hours per week) – up to £500
 - Medium (More than 3 hours and less than 9 hours per week) - up to £1,000
 - Large (More than 9 hours per week) - up to £1,500
- Leeds CAB has received £75,000 to maintain their level of support, delivering welfare advice services. Service delivery includes, telephone, online and drop-in sessions, including outreach, covering:
 - Immigration, housing and benefits.
 - Employment legislation and advice
 - Adult social care advice including mental health and primary care.
 - Children and families related advice, including money, energy, and benefits.

4.6 Wakefield

4.6.1 Governance and approach:

- The Fund is Overseen by the Resident First Board, which was developed from the Resident’s Recovery Group originally set up to respond to the pandemic. The Board oversees the Household Support Fund too.



Photo: The Mayor speaking with volunteers at Help at the Hub (Eastmoor Community Project) in Wakefield District

- Help at the Hub – a network of 8 VCSE run community-based venues, was set up by the Recovery Group, to get support in-person to those that needed it during the pandemic. It is managed by the VCSE infrastructure organisation Nova.
- The network provides a mechanism for channelling additional resources and services to support the most vulnerable and disadvantaged.

4.6.2 Providers:

- Hub locations were selected based on the following criteria:
 - In areas of deprivation.
 - Accessible.

- Staffed 9-5.
- Managerial structure.
- Regulatory compliance including H&S and Safeguarding.
- Already providing a range of community-based services.
- Room /space for additional service provision, in particular for a CAB adviser.
- The eight VCSE organisations that are in the Help at the Hub network are:
 - Queen's Mill, Castleford
 - St Marys Pontefract
 - Havercroft and Ryhill Community Learning Centre
 - Kellingley Club
 - St Georges Lupset
 - Eastmoor Community Project
 - Westfield Centre South Elmsall
 - Lightwaves Leisure and Community Centre
- Citizens Advice Wakefield District provide the welfare advice and support are located at all the hubs and across the District.

4.6.3 Service delivery:

- The Hub network Organisations all offer a range of services that have been developed over many years to respond to local needs. There is a difference between some service provision across the network.
- As a minimum they provide access to a CAB advisor and employment advisor (via the Step-up programme) in each.
- Other services include:
 - Emergency food parcels/community pantry/food bank.
 - Support for the Cost-of-Living voucher.
 - Access to a Jobcentre Plus/DWP adviser.
 - Digital access and technical support.

EVIDENCE: Welfare and Debt Advice and Support Examples

Support provided through Wakefield and District CAB

- To date 343 people have been supported on 1,074 issues, resulting in 190 cases.
- 70% of clients have been supported in person and 17% by telephone.
- The large majority of clients seek advice and support on benefits and tax credits issues.
- Personal Independence payments is the top benefit issue facing their clients with 52% of those clients with a benefits issue.

Support provided through Leeds CAB

Clients have gained an average of £57 as a result of the support provided. In total 2,500 people have been supported in Leeds, resulting in an overall increase in weekly income for those supported of £142,500. This in turn impacts in terms of local spend in shops and services.

The support is provided to those most in need:

61% with disabilities, 45% from poverty groups, and 56% women

CASE STUDY

St Mary's Community Centre, Pontefract - Help at the Hub

Arthur (named changed for confidentiality) lives very local to St Mary's Centre and has accessed a great deal of support via Help at The Hub since the launch and continues to do so.

Arthur suffers from acute health problems and is registered disabled. The centre is fully accessible in line with the Equality Act 2010, therefore Arthur is able to confidently access St Mary's and all services provided here.

Arthur has accessed the Friday morning Citizens Advice drop-ins on a number of occasions which have been very helpful for him with various concerns. These have enabled him to access further assistance from the Department of Work and Pensions drop-ins, which are also held on Friday mornings at St Mary's. Professional and sensitive advice is offered at these sessions in a friendly, comfortable setting.

Arthur has become confident about coming into St Mary's for technical help, as he has difficulty in accessing the internet, using emails etc.

Staff provide support in the following ways:

- Send emails and attachments on his behalf (medical and legal)
- Type up handwritten notes to help with legibility.
- Help download documents.
- Photocopying and scanning

Arthur has also asked for assistance for his elderly neighbours. For example, his elderly neighbour needed help furnishing his WDH property. St Mary's contacted the relevant partners and referred Arthur's neighbours to Cash Wise and Wakefield Council Financial Services.

In other similar cases staff would signpost to a Wakefield Adult Education beginners IT course at St Mary's, so the individual could learn how to use emails, on-line services etc. However, due to his health conditions, this would not be appropriate for Arthur, therefore assistance is provided by staff whenever necessary.

5. FUND DISTRIBUTION AND SERVICE PROVISION– KEY FINDINGS

5.1 This section sets out our key generalised findings on how effectively and efficiently the Mayor’s Fund has been implemented and services provided, drawing on the desk research undertaken and feedback through the consultation interviews. It points to areas to celebrate, opportunities for refinement and improvement, a headline assessment of Value for Money (VFM) based on headline outputs achieved, and emergent impacts.

5.2 Promotion and Engagement

5.2.1 Many of the community based VCSE organisations involved in providing support across West Yorkshire already have a high profile and familiarity within their communities. This helps to break down the barriers for people seeking help. Furthermore, many have staff and volunteers that live locally, and this enables successful promotion and engagement of those that need help.

5.2.2 Engagement often works best where individuals and families are already accessing support from venues and organisations and can access different types of support from the same trusted providers (directly or indirectly through referrals).

5.2.3 Word of mouth is powerful in building awareness and trust. Where beneficiaries have received the support they need they often inform others in their networks about the help received.

5.2.4 Feedback from the community organisations suggested that promotion of available services was more effective if it was undertaken via the local community groups (i.e. more localised and customised to specific communities) – rather than activities that might be undertaken at a district level via the Council, for example.

5.2.5 Most services are oversubscribed and some heavily so. Some organisations are therefore not actively promoting their offer as they would not be able to support everyone who may respond, with the resources available. There is more demand than staffing hours available.

5.3 Beneficiaries and Inclusivity

5.3.1 Help is provided as far as possible for anyone that seeks it. The delivery partners do not turn people away.

5.3.2 Demand for the services across all districts is rising – and most of it needs to be delivered in person, if it is to reach the people that are most in need it.

5.3.3 Delivery organisations may not be able to offer full flexibility and access to support that some groups may need because of, for example, their limited opening hours, which may not suit those facing in-work poverty as they are at work during those times. The overall limited resources available necessarily restrict service availability in terms of both staffing and opening hours.

EVIDENCE: Fund distribution and support provided in Calderdale

- Overall, the total awarded across these projects from WYCA as part of the Calderdale Cost of Living Fund is £76,950.
- From this funding, £25,108.64 had been spent by the end of January across the voluntary and community groups.
- Noah's Ark was awarded £18,000, the highest amount awarded.
- Although several organisations commented that beneficiaries were evenly distributed across all wards (such as Age UK and Our Place Calderdale) Todmorden, Park and Town were the most predominant wards for beneficiaries.
- White British beneficiaries were the predominant ethnic background overall however, Asian was the most predominant for St Augustine's and Pakistani and Kashmiri was the most predominant for Advancement of Community Empowerment CIC.
- Although work has just begun on several projects at The Brunswick Centre and Space at Field Lane there has been a significant impact thus far with 1,098 people who have benefitted directly from this funding. Out of these 1,098 people, 365 people with a disability have been supported.
- Warm space provision and advice support are the most predominant type of support offered.

5.3.4 Most targets set have been achieved/exceeded e.g., 2,009 households were supported in Kirklees by the first monitoring return (against an overall target of 600), and 1,098 people in Calderdale were supported in December and January (against an overall target of 285).

5.3.5 There were significant numbers with disabilities/health conditions accessing the support provided by the Mayor's Fund. Support on Personal Independence Payments (PIPs) is the highest need with regard to benefits support across CABs and specialist community organisations. This is largely because DWP tend to reject the majority of those that apply. Advice is provided to help them to complete the applications properly and these support organisations have a strong track record of overturning the rejections on appeal. This in turn has a significant impact in terms of reducing dependency on the community services, as their income significantly increases.

5.3.6 Language support is offered by many of the delivery partners. One Calderdale VCSE partner organisation recruited a key worker from a deprived community, with lived experience and understanding of culture and issues, however, another Calderdale partner who did not provide language support had more limited take-up by ethnic minority groups.

5.4 Range of Support Delivered

5.4.1 A range of services are provided across each of the districts, with a focus on filling local gaps and adding additional resource/capacity.

5.4.2 An overview of services provided in each of the districts is set out in Section 4 of the report under Local Delivery Arrangements – this section provides additional information and examples of how delivering support has worked in practice.

5.4.3 Welfare and debt advice and support is provided through the CABs and specialist voluntary organisations, such as Disability Support Calderdale. They provide advice and support on diverse issues facing their communities, including:

- Benefits and tax credits
- Benefits Universal Credit
- Charitable Support and Food bank referrals
- Consumer goods and services
- Debt
- Education
- Employment
- Financial services and capability
- Health and community care
- Housing
- Immigration and asylum
- Relationships and family
- Tax
- Travel and transport
- Utilities and communications
- Legal.

5.4.4 Access to a Food bank, community pantry and/or emergency food parcels are provided across many of the community venues. Community pantries are a relatively new service and in Wakefield's hubs, are only offered in St Swithun's and St George's Community centres. More organisations across West Yorkshire are looking to provide pantries, as a means of helping their customers to become less reliant on food parcels and food banks.



Photo: The Mayor visiting the food pantry at St Swithun's Community Centre in Wakefield

5.4.5 Warm spaces have been supported through this funding – building on initial LA provision, i.e. in Leeds, Calderdale and Kirklees.

EVIDENCE: Support provided through Warm Spaces in Leeds

As at 20/03/23 VCSE Sector Warm spaces have reported a total of 26,137 unique visits and that they have made 1,762 signposting referrals.*

The following groups of people have been identified as common attendees:

- Older People
- People who are isolated
- People experiencing financial hardship
- Disabled People

Many VCSE sector Warm Spaces have used investment to develop activities that bring people together:

A British Asian lady in her late 30s - who we know to be very socially isolated - lives alone in a small flat and is often feeling uneasy or scared to go out on her own, particularly when its dark or later into the evening.

She wasn't interested in coming into our Warm Space initially. She said she would feel uncomfortable sitting with strangers even though we had books to read, TV to watch and board games available.

A few other people had asked for a craft session, so we looked into this. We're now working with another charity to offer the free craft activity during our warm sessions. It's been running for 2 sessions so far with further 6 planned. After some encouragement the lady decided to give it a try. She's attended both and is starting to talk to and make friends again with some of the other participants. We have visibly noticed it is helping re-build her self-confidence.

* This figure is based on daily sessional reports estimating the number of visitors to Warm Spaces and the inter-disciplinary team leading the work believe it to be a conservative estimate.

5.4.6 Digital /Wi-Fi access at the community venues accessing the Mayor's Fund is a key element. It helps to lift the barriers presented through digital poverty and ensures that residents can use the essential services they need and that are increasingly only available online. Many of the organisations also offer technical support and /or access to learning for those without digital skills.

5.4.7 Support for other costs, in addition to food and energy have also been enabled, addressing those gaps not covered by the Household Support Fund.

5.5 What works well?

5.5.1 The overall contract management arrangements and collaboration between WYCA and the LAs have worked well. The LAs fed back that they had a very strong and effective working relationship with the WYCA Contract Manager, who set out the Mayor's Funding aims and worked with them to plan and agree the most effective use of the funds in each area. Similarly most of the LAs and their VCSE lead organisations responded quickly to ensure that the Fund was distributed within very short timescales.

CASE STUDY

Support provided by Advancement of Community Empowerment, Calderdale

The organisation provides household items such as electrical items, warm bedding, warm clothing, school items and other resources, which have all been bought through the Mayor's Fund.

This has for example benefitted a young family of four, mother, father and two young children under three years of age. Mother and father are both unemployed and on multiple benefits, and have multiple mental and physical health issues, living in rented accommodation. After meeting with the family to establish their urgent needs, several household items were purchased, and they were referred to CAB to seek further advice and support. A meeting with their landlord led to essential remedial work being carried out.

The beneficiaries are now empowered on how to manage their affairs better, and where to seek support.

5.5.2 The delivery models are bespoke to each place, working well, and have proven to be successful in reaching those that are most affected by the Cost-of-Living crisis. They are not reinventing the wheel and creating new /duplicating infrastructure, thus are ensuring value for money, alongside increasing sustainability and resilience of VCSE organisations.

5.5.3 The ability to 'flex' the funding to respond to local needs is key. It helps to ensure that the support available fills local gaps in provision, as well as working to complement other sources of funding made available by the Councils and the Community Foundations in particular. This also enables:

- The community organisation to look at what they can do to engage with those groups that they may not ordinarily be able to support. For example, one organisation engages with young people in their community through their cybercafé – they come in to do their homework, and it offers a place for them to feel safe and connected.
- Organisations to test new approaches – e.g. Calderdale CAB wanted to engage more effectively with Asian women, in Park Ward, Halifax, to provide financial and health support and services, as these groups may not access the support they need for language and cultural reasons. Recruiting a member of staff from this area, and training them to engage and provide support, has helped to overcome barriers to engagement, and provide responsive services, including energy advice in the beneficiaries' first language. Plans are underway to deliver ESOL classes in partnership with a local provider.

5.5.4 Local VCSE umbrella/infrastructure organisations have consistently targeted funding to enable diverse community-based groups/organisations to access resources to deliver interventions, thus extending reach into more disadvantaged communities and demographic groups.

5.5.5 The Hub model works well as a means of offering a range of services that are appropriate for the local communities and channelling other resources and activities through them.

CASE STUDY – Our Place Calderdale

Julie is a carer for her daughter and lives with other family members that she supports. Julie has disabilities herself and often struggles to take her daughter out, especially at weekends. Her daughter attends a day service, at Our Place, during the week, but to reduce her outgoings Julie doesn't have hot meals and often stays home feeling quite isolated, and at weekends, because of her daughter's disabilities, combined with her own, often stays home as it's a physical struggle for them both.

Julie has now started attending the Sunday warm spaces sessions which thanks to the funding, the organisation is able to offer for free. Her daughter attends with her, meaning they can spend time safely together, out of the house.

Julie is able to socialise whilst her daughter mixes with others, they are able to take part in activities that stimulate her daughter and entertain Julie, and Julie is able to have a hot lunch and as many cups of tea as she would like! Julie is now also attending the Thursday carer's wellbeing warm space session for the same reasons whilst her daughter is at day services.

This service had made such a difference to Julie's mental and emotional wellbeing. She has accessed further support from being able to talk to others going through the same struggles. She hopes Our Place are able to source further funding to be able to keep providing these services for free or little cost and extend the organisation's reach for those currently struggling in the community.

Her daughter has also greatly benefited from attending. She has made friends within the group, taken part in activities that she would not normally engage in, and is much happier being able to go out of the house and still spend time with her mum. She hassles Julie to bring her every week!

Our Place have new attendees who are really struggling at the moment and are so grateful that spaces like these are available. They comment that it's like having a day out, but not having to worry about the cost, or being cold, isolated or alone; and being able to get support not only from staff and volunteers, but from their peers who make them realise that they are not struggling alone.

5.5.6 Examples of specific interventions that have been identified as working well include:

- Offering food pantries (instead of /or alongside the alternatives)– enabling residents to select what they want to buy (at a reduced price), knowing that no food will go to waste. This approach also contributes to increased independence and resilience. (Wakefield partners are considering how to expand this through UKSPF funding, to include food education in each of the Hubs).
- Advice services delivering where it is needed in the communities on a face-to-face basis, are working well and are over-subscribed. The model of CAB advisers in the Help at the Hub network in Wakefield has been proven to be particularly effective, especially where those receiving advice can then immediately access other support available in the Hubs. The

ability to access more than one support intervention/service at a time at the Hubs helps to reduce outgoings/ travel time and stress for many customers.

- Mental health support through a dedicated worker, in Bradford, helps to fill gaps in local provision.

5.6 Challenges and Issues:

- 5.6.1 The funding provided to organisations is typically not a relatively large amount and they themselves have been impacted by increasing prices. The challenge for many is to maintain the service provision in these circumstances, whilst also providing additional services with ‘contributions’ rather than ‘full costs recovery’ funding.
- 5.6.2 Accessing and organising staff within very short timescales for delivery, and on short funding agreements. Accessing staff with skills for specialist advisory services, e.g. debt management and mental health, is a particular issue.
- 5.6.3 Warm spaces have to date had lower than anticipated take up, for example, in Kirklees. Feedback indicates that the key reasons for this include: covid fear; the weather has not been as cold as it might have been; potential stigma/negative perception attached to using a warm space (except where a range of activities is offered); and also the geography of Kirklees making it more difficult to get to the warm spaces for those that live more in the more rural parts. In Leeds, whilst they have worked well for a number of reasons, there is also a need to consider how these same spaces may be of use during the summer, in particular, to continue to offer a place for social connections.
- 5.6.4 Some organisations are struggling to engage with specific communities, despite having staff with the ability to speak the language and promotional material in the language. Research undertaken in certain ethnic minority communities (on behalf of Age UK Calderdale) indicates that the type of support offered (advice services in this case) is not always wanted and so there would be limited take-up of services even if it was specifically targeted.

5.7 Monitoring and Management Information

- 5.7.1 Recording every customer and their needs is a practical challenge. Delivery organisation staff often find it difficult to obtain the personal details required for monitoring from people in crisis and/or are vulnerable and categorise them. They also find it difficult to turn away someone who might not strictly fit the target beneficiary criteria. The cost-of-living crisis has had a far wider impact on groups that might not previously been affected.
- 5.7.2 Further thought and planning is needed for monitoring and measuring impact – for preventative interventions it is often harder to show impact. This needs to be built into a clear evaluation framework, with LAs setting out the specific information that should be collected, and feedback from service users also built into the process.

- 5.7.3 Because they face multiple challenges, many beneficiaries will seek to access various types of support – e.g. vouchers, then welfare advice, and also employment support etc. This makes it difficult for organisations to record unique users, particularly when they may return for more support at a later date.
- 5.7.4 Some organisations are well-placed to monitor, because of the nature of support e.g. CAB, or they may already be collecting the same data for another funding source e.g. Public Health.
- 5.7.5 The CABs record all their activities /support provision and collect a range of data and metrics including:
- Increase in clients helped and client contacts
 - Outreach Clients Postcodes
 - Enquiries by subject summary
 - Numbers of clients and enquiries
 - Benefits, UC & Tax Credits enquiries
 - Welfare Rights Enquiries
 - Housing enquiries
 - Employment enquiries
 - Employment enquiries comparison
 - Immigration enquiries
 - Immigration enquiries comparison
 - Utilities enquiries
 - Utilities enquiries comparison
 - Who are the clients- Gender, Disability/long term health issues, Ethnicity.
 - Case studies
 - Client Feedback

5.8 Areas for Improvements

- 5.8.1 For WYCA to agree clear reporting requirements (including deadlines) with all the LAs, having agreed what is most usefully collected, whilst ensuring that VCSE organisations are able to collect data against the agreed metrics. The starting point for this reporting is also to set clear targets and ensure delivery organisations understand how to record and measure the targets and have systems (and staffing /digital resources) in place for doing so.
- 5.8.2 More could be done by some delivery organisations to be more inclusive, particularly with ethnic minority groups and faith organisations. This includes considering language and culture as barriers and working with stakeholders within those communities to help to improve access to support. This would also include sharing experiences across the delivery organisations from those who have successfully engaged and delivered into these communities.
- 5.8.3 More help could be provided to address mental health support gaps.

5.9 Overall Lessons Learned

- 5.9.1 Not to prescribe and make assumptions about what communities need – it is key to meaningfully consult with them.
- 5.9.2 One size does not fit all – provision needs to reflect the local needs and gaps. Different demographics, and indeed topographies, impact on service demand and take-up and so each area /delivery organisation has different existing provision.
- 5.9.3 Delivery organisations need clear communications about why they are required to collect MI and what it will be used for, and to be consulted on the best way to collect what is needed and align it, as far as possible, to other existing data collection activities.
- 5.9.4 A little goes a long way in terms of funding support to the VCSE sector, but organisations do need to be properly resourced to meet the increasing demand they are experiencing – this includes resources needed at strategic/ fund management level, as well as delivery.
- 5.9.5 Not to focus just on our most deprived areas – some people facing a crisis are living in relatively affluent areas, however, due to stigma they may find it difficult to seek help.
- 5.9.6 Longer-term planning and funding agreements are needed to enable VCSE organisations plan their staffing (including training volunteers). They cannot easily recruit on short-term contracts (and there is a skills shortage/ gap in specialist fields such as debt management).

5.10 Value for Money

5.10.1 The following table gives an indication of VFM through the numbers of recorded beneficiaries supported in each of the Districts. Data is provided from the progress reports and management information collected and submitted to WYCA to date.

District	Minimum unique target beneficiaries to be supported	Numbers supported to date (Individuals/Households)
Calderdale (to end Jan)	285	1,098
Bradford	732	1,125
Kirklees (to end March)	600	2,009
Leeds (those receiving supported referrals via warm spaces)	1,080	1762
Wakefield (to end Feb)	475	487
Total	3,172	6,481

- 5.10.2 It should be stated that this is not the complete picture across all Districts, as monitoring reports still have to be submitted for support to the end of March across all districts.
- 5.10.3 Early indications, however, suggest that more than double the planned beneficiaries have been supported.
- 5.10.4 VFM based on beneficiaries supported and funding allocated (i.e. unit costs), is therefore significant, as the Fund, across most of West Yorkshire has already supported higher numbers of beneficiaries than targeted.
- 5.10.5 The table below sets out the unit costs against those numbers supported and reported on to date. It should be noted that these figures are expected to reduce further (and therefore provide even higher VFM) once data for support provided to the end of the delivery period is fully collected and analysed.

District	Unit costs for target number of beneficiaries £	Unit costs for beneficiaries supported to date £
Calderdale	298.25	77.41
Bradford	299.80	195.07
Kirklees	297.67	88.90
Leeds	299.95	183.85
Wakefield	300.00	292.61
Total	299.34	146.51

- 5.10.6 The figures, despite not being complete, evidence significant VFM for the services provided, with unit costs ranging from £77.41 to £292.61, but all less than the original of around £300.

5.11 Impact

5.11.1 It is too early to fully assess and quantify the impact of the support provided through the Fund, with the earliest service provision only starting in late December.

5.11.2 Feedback through the consultations suggests there is however some evidence of the following impact:

Who	What Impact
Individuals Resident/Households	<p>Increase in income and financial security helping to cover increased living costs.</p> <p>Social connections and social capital</p> <p>Improved health, well-being and confidence.</p> <p>Reduction of dependency on support / benefits, by accessing a wider package of support.</p> <p>Widening horizons and increased aspirations and motivation</p> <p>Progression from accessing support to volunteering in the organisations – for some.</p>
VCSE Organisations	<p>Ability to support more of those in need.</p> <p>Increased range of services.</p> <p>Improved sustainability, including through room hire to agencies.</p> <p>Increased profile/visibility and reach resulting in increased number of customers.</p> <p>Increased partnership and collaborative working to respond to local needs.</p>
Wider Community	<p>Increased spending in local shops/services, due to individuals increasing income (multiplier effect).</p> <p>Investment in community facilities has had a positive impact on community resilience and has reduced isolation.</p> <p>Increased community access to more services, skills, education and training facilities for disadvantaged communities.</p>

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 There is evidence of significant demand for the services and support provided by the Mayor's Fund, and it exceeds that available in many cases, in particular for emergency advice and support services.
- 6.2 The support through the Fund is highly accessible to many communities including those in deprived areas and is helping residents to address their needs, combined with other resources made available through the Local Authorities and other sources.
- 6.3 The delivery models work, providing excellent VFM, enabling diverse groups to access support they need.
- 6.4 The delivery models and community-based delivery arrangements supported through Fund embody the Asset Based Community Development approach promoted through the WY Inclusive Growth Framework. They help local residents to access support through organisations and people that they are familiar with and have a 'trust' relationship with. They help to address the needs of people who are at crisis and vulnerable, offering support that will enable them to become more resilient over time.
- 6.5 Given the limitations of the timing for this interim evaluation, there is inevitably a need to collect more detailed information to fully assess the impact of the Fund. Any follow up evaluation would benefit from a clear evaluation framework, which also encompasses how the delivery VCSE organisations collect data and what they collect.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 There are a number of key recommendations arising from this interim evaluation:

- Maintain going forward into Phase 2 the flexibility offered through Phase 1 of this Fund to date.
- Encourage local areas to further consult with groups and users to decide how the Fund should be best allocated, addressing local gaps and needs.
- Encourage an increase in provision to address mental health support gaps, across each of the LA areas.
- Support, sustain and further develop VCSE infrastructures already in place – retaining knowledge, experience and relationships, to enable beneficiaries to gain resilience through trusted local provision, with local planning, collaboration and coordination, all minimising duplication of support.
- Share experience and approaches across groups within a LA area, and amongst delivery leads/LAs at the WY level, including through the dissemination of this report.
- Ensure as far as possible that there is sufficient forward planning for activities that involve the VCSE sector. The sector needs reasonable time to plan, tender & put in place resources to support capacity.
- Recognise that many VCSE organisations are currently under-resourced and ensure that MI collection requirements are proportionate – and communicate early to them what data is needed and what it will be used for.
- Identify potential linkages and opportunities for Fund expansion and continuation e.g. via corporate sponsorship, philanthropy, and other public resources – especially capacity building.
- Develop a monitoring and evaluation framework to fully assess the impact of the Fund and identify good practice for sharing and future delivery.

ANNEX: Consultees

Organisation	Interviewee
Calderdale Council	Sian Rogers & Amy Jenkinson
Bradford Council	Sarah Possingham
Kirklees Council	Julian Hobson & Neil Roberts
Leeds City Council	Lee Hemsworth & Nick Hart
Wakefield Council	Amanda Scott
Community Foundation Calderdale	Rachel Burnett
Calderdale CAB	Caroline Jones
Age UK Calderdale & Kirklees	Rachel Horner
Disability Support Calderdale	David Naylor
Bradford CAB	Peg Alexander & Razina Bostan
SVP, Bradford	Julie-Anne Webb
One Community Foundation	Emma Woods-Bolger
Voluntary Action Leeds	Richard Warrington
Leeds CAB	Dianne Lyons
Nova, Wakefield	Scott Copeland
Wakefield District CAB	Simon Topham
St Mary's Project	Denise Pallett
St George's Community Centre	Berni O'Brien